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## CONTENTS

### ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

Accidents and Symptomatic Actions .....	<i>Dr. S. A. Tannenbaum</i>	129-150
Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" .....	<i>Mr. Leo Kaplan</i>	151-158
The Religious Psychologist .....	<i>Mr. Th. Schroeder</i>	159-168
Anagogic Psychoanalysis .....	<i>Dr. E. von Geijerstamm</i>	169-182
Analysing a Freudian Analysis .....	<i>Dr. S. A. Tannenbaum</i>	183-192
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT .....	<i>INSIDE BACK COVER</i>	



# PSYCHE AND EROS

(Successor to *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse*)

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## Accidents and Symptomatic Actions

By Samuel A. Tannenbaum, M. D., *New York*

There is a class of actions of a trivial nature indulged in by many persons automatically and "unconsciously" which, when attention is called to them, are attributed to "thoughtlessness", to "an impulse to be doing something" or to "keeping the hands busy", or to "accident". Professor Freud calls these "chance" actions "symptomatic actions" because, he says, they give expression to something which not even the doer suspects, which, as a rule, he does not intend to impart to the observer, and which he purposes to keep to himself. (*Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens*, 1919, pp. 213-214.) These chance—and usually playful—actions are not the results of clumsiness in the execution of a conscious purpose, exist wholly for themselves, are indulged in, says Freud, because no one, not even the doer, suspects a significant purpose or intention in them, and "regularly" have "sense and meaning" to which another mode of expression is denied by the individual. If this is true they deserve to be regarded as symptoms or indications of Unconscious motives, as betrayals of re-

pressed desires, and to be interpreted as symptoms of repressed complexes. To fall under the heading of "symptomatic actions" these performances must not be the results of "clumsiness" in doing something else, must not be conspicuous, striking or unusual, and their effects must be trivial. (P. 213). These "symptomatic actions" are of two kinds:

1. Those that an individual indulges in habitually and are performed under certain circumstances, e.g., playing with one's chain, pulling at one's beard, scratching one's head, stroking a smooth surface with a finger or the palm of the hand, picking at one's nose, biting the cuticle of the fingers, etc. Freud regards these, rightly, as a kind of tic;

2. Those that occur only rarely, e.g., playing with one's cane, scribbling with a pencil that one's hand happens to come in contact with, kneading bread crumbs, playing with one's buttons, clinking the coins in one's pockets, etc. Those indulging in these actions are usually surprised and incredulous when their attention is called to their behavior.

Professor Freud is convinced that the



correctness of the interpretations of the symptomatic actions of his patients may be established in every instance "with adequate certainty" from the accompanying circumstances, the theme under discussion at the time of their occurrence, and the associations to the "harmless" or "thoughtless" action when attention is called to it. (P. 217.) He advises physicians and students of human nature to be on the lookout for these symptomatic actions; the former because it will give them valuable and far-reaching insight into their patients' psychic life, and the latter because it will enable them to learn much about humanity which they could not otherwise learn, and perhaps even more than they care to know, and thus acquire a wisdom not unlike King Solomon's. (P. 224).

That Professor Freud does not succeed in proving that all symptomatic and chance actions of the kind he is discussing are valid psychic acts, manifestations of important psychic process, the expression of hidden motives, the products of a repression-unconscious, I propose to show in the following analyses of such purposeless and unintentional activities as I have observed in healthy as well as in neurotic individuals and by analysing some of Professor Freud's analyses.

*Example 1.*—Mrs. T. was peeling potatoes in the kitchen one forenoon, without thinking of anything in particular. Suddenly the door-bell rang, the telephone bell rang and the soup on the kitchen stove began to run over,—all at the same moment. She jumped up from her seat undecided which of the

three tasks to attend to first,—whether to go to the door to admit a possible patient, to answer the telephone (there is an extension in the kitchen) or to attend to the soup. In her haste and confusion, she cut her thumb with the paring knife.

Here we have an accident of the kind that Professor Freud calls a symptomatic action. But no amount of exploration will discover a demonstrable Unconscious motive. It is of course possible to say that Mrs. T. was punishing herself, unconsciously, for not letting the cook peel the potatoes, for having allowed the maid to go out at that time, for some unknown fantasy of being unfaithful to her husband, etc., etc. But not a single one of these or any similar explanation could be proved by any method known to science. And, in fact, no such explanation need be sought for. The accident occurred because of an inco-ordination between the various unrelated and dis-similar activities (going to the door, answering the telephone, turning down the gas flame) which occurred to Mrs. T's mind, all of which were *energising different groups of muscles at the same time*. In consequence of the inco-ordinated and uncontrolled innervation of many groups of muscles the action of potato-peeling was interrupted and distorted so that the tip of the sharp knife cut into the thumb which guided the blade. Many "accidents" are undoubtedly caused in this way.

*Example 2.*—Professor Freud reports (*l.c.*, p. 204) the following analysis:



"During her session with me, a young woman suddenly thinks of telling me that while she was manicuring her nails yesterday she 'had cut into the flesh' as she was attempting to cut away the delicate skin in the nail bed. This is such a trivial matter that one wonders why it was remembered and mentioned, and one is therefore led to the supposition that he is dealing with a symptomatic action. It was, as a matter of fact, the ring finger to which the little accident occurred,—the finger on which the wedding ring is worn. And, in addition to this, yesterday was the anniversary of her wedding, a circumstance which imparts to the injury to the delicate skin a very definite and easily to be guessed meaning. At the same time she also narrates a dream which alludes to her husband's awkwardness [presumably in sexual matters] and her anesthesia as a woman. But why was it the ring finger of her left hand that she injured, seeing that the wedding ring is worn on the right hand? Her husband is a lawyer, a "Doctor Juris" [i.e., a doctor of civil *rights*], but in her girlhood her secret affection had been bestowed on a physician (jocularly designated a "Doctor of the Left"). A 'marriage to the left' [i.e., a left-handed marriage], it may be remarked, has a very definite meaning."

A complete demonstration of the unscientific character of the above analysis would require a great deal more space than we can give it here. We shall, therefore, only mention its most salient weaknesses. Nothing

whatsoever is told us as to what the young woman was thinking of while she was manicuring her finger nails, what happened at the moment to disturb her, nor how the accident actually occurred (whether the point of the scissors cut the skin or whether the cuticle knife slipped into the nail bed, etc.). If she had been suddenly startled out of a fantasy or day dream by someone entering the room or some other unexpected occurrence, we would have light on the psycho-physiological mechanics of the accident. (Cf., the preceding Example.) Besides, what is "the fine skin in the nail bed" that one trims away? It seems to us that the "fine skin" was invented by the patient or by Professor Freud to enable him to find in the occurrence a parallel to a fantasy-defloration by an allusion to the hymen. And isn't it true that even if it had been some other finger Professor Freud would have found the same significance in the accident? Or even if it hadn't happened on the anniversary day of the unlucky (left-handed) marriage? Surely this woman has accidentally cut her finger on other days, too, although we are not told anything about it. Had the accident occurred on the right hand we would in all likelihood have been told that it symbolized a wish that her husband were potent. If he was potent we would have been told that it symbolized a wish to experience the pleasures of her first initiation into the art of love. The number of possible "interpretations" is limitless.

The reference to a "left-handed



marriage" is pointless. As far as we can ascertain, this designation is given to a morganatic marriage and there is nothing in Professor Freud's account to show that this played any role in this woman's life. If he meant only an unlucky or unhappy marriage nothing is gained, for the accident could have been interpreted as it was interpreted even if the injury had occurred on the other hand. Merely en passant we would point out that if the lady was manicuring a finger of her left hand when something or other occurred to interfere with what she was doing she couldn't have injured the finger of the right hand. Though the matter is not of much importance we may also call attention to the fact that the marriage ring is often worn on the left and not on the right hand, —a fact which largely nullifies the allusion to the left-handed marriage. In scientific matters precision as to detail is of the utmost importance—to establish the objectivity of the scientist, if for no other reason.

To be entitled to be considered a symptomatic action such an accident as the above must, Professor Freud says, be trivial in the effects it produces. Obviously no one can foresee, not even the Unconscious, what the consequence of an accident may turn out to be. In the above case, for instance, or in the case reported in Example 1, there might have resulted a very serious infection which might even have terminated fatally. Such things have been known to occur. That the results of slight accidents may prove to be very serious I had a chance

to observe many years ago. An ophthalmologist of good repute was treating an old man, blind of one eye, for acute iritis or corneal ulcerations of the healthy eye; intending to put a drop of a mild cocaine solution on the diseased cornea, the doctor reached out for his little bottle of cocaine which was standing on a tray with a number of other bottles of the same size and shape; he knew just how the bottles were arranged and could pick up any one he wanted without looking at the labels, exactly as a typist can automatically place his finger on the right key; but this time he accidentally took the wrong bottle and dropped a large-sized drop of nitric acid on the cornea and totally blinded the unfortunate old man. How the accident was determined I was not able to discover.

In the above analysis of the damaged nail bed the question is raised by the analyst why the patient thought it worth while to mention so trivial an occurrence as the accidental injury to the nail bed of one of her fingers. He has evidently forgotten that his fundamental rule is to instruct the patients to tell him everything that goes thru their minds during their session with him. But, we may be asked, why did that thought enter her mind? Seeing that Prof. Freud omitted to ask that trivial question and that the patient is not here to be interrogated, we can do no more than offer a conjectural answer to the question raised. Injuring the nail bed during the manicuring process is not necessarily a trifling occurrence (no more than a bro-



ken leg); it may be and often is followed by a local inflammation, infection and even abscess formation (felon). For aught we know to the contrary this woman's finger was inflamed and painful the day after her accident. And if so, we have a sufficient explanation for her having mentioned the subject. And, on the other hand, it occurs to us that if the patient's finger had been inflamed and sore and she refrained from mentioning the little incident to her analyst (because he refuses to have anything to do with his patient's organic maladies) he would have found therein a manifestation of resistance and hence warrant for interpreting the accident as a symptomatic act. We see then that inevitably the patient is between the two horns of a dilemma.

But, is Professor Freud's interpretation the only possible interpretation? Inasmuch as the allusion to the left-handed marriage is largely nullified by the fact that the marriage ring is often worn on the right hand, we shall permit ourselves one or two psychoanalytic interpretations: finger is, with absolute psychoanalytic certainty, a phallic symbol; cutting the phallus signifies emasculation, castration. Inasmuch as Professor Freud intimates that the patient's husband was not fully potent and that the woman was consequently anesthetic, we are permitted, nay, compelled to interpret the occurrence as a symbolic punishment of her husband for his incompetence or of the "Doctor of the left" who did not marry her or seduce her. If the patient was in the stage of "transference" and iden-

tifies her analyst with either her husband or the Doctor, other interpretations suggest themselves which the reader may be trusted to work out for himself.

In the absence of data on the questions we have indicated above it would be ridiculous to attempt a merely psychological explanation for the woman's behavior.

*Example 49.*—In corroboration of his statement that "the mistakes of normal human beings are, as a rule, of a harmless nature", Professor Freud tells us (*l. c.*, pp. 197-198) of a "mistake" he once made. He had for years been making two daily visits on one of his oldest patients, a woman over 90 years of age, for the purpose of putting some eye-drops into her eyes and giving her a hypodermatic injection of a 2 per cent morphine solution. The eye-drops were in a blue bottle and the morphine in a white bottle. On one of these visits his mind was probably occupied with something and the automatic movements required for the performance of his duties were carried out without the necessary attention. Suddenly he realized that he had dipped the dropper into the wrong bottle and had put the morphine solution into the eye! "I was badly frightened and then calmed myself with the reflection that a few drops of a 2 per cent morphine solution can do no harm even in the conjunctival sac. The fright was evidently due to something else."

It will be of interest and well worth while to see how Dr. Freud explains his mistake. "A certain degree of



remissness" in the discharge of his professional duties would be a sufficient explanation if we knew who handled the little bottles, how and by whom they were usually placed on the table or the tray, and whether they had been similarly or differently placed there on that particular day, etc. But of such things Professor Freud never speaks because he immediately goes a-hunting for hidden motives. In the present instance he justifies his quest on the ground that inasmuch as his mistake was such as could not result in harm his fright was "evidently" due to something in the Unconscious. That this is really no justification for the course he pursued must be apparent to any one who takes into consideration the aforementioned banal circumstances (the position of the bottles, etc.), as well as the fact that the realization of the harmlessness of the mistake necessarily came after (not before or during) the mistake. Surely no physician is so callous to human suffering as not to be frightened on suddenly realizing that he had "made a mistake", especially if the mistake was in connection with so delicate an organ as the eye; the more kindly and the more humane a physician he is, the greater, presumably, will be his fright. Besides, it would be interesting in this connection to know how Professor Freud measures the degree of fright and how much fright he thinks would be normal in a meaningless harmless mistake, especially if the patient is over ninety years old.

Let us now examine Professor Freud's explanation. He says (*l. c.*):

"In attempting to analyze this trifling mistake, there at once occurred to me a phrase—'to make a mistake (an assault) on the old woman'—which might point to a short road to the explanation. My mind was under the influence of a dream that a young man had told me the night before and which could be interpreted only as meaning sexual intercourse with his mother. The odd fact that the [oedipus] fable [of Sophocles] takes no exception to the age of Queen Jocasta seemed to harmonize well with my conclusion that being in love with one's mother is not a matter of her present personality but her youthful memory-picture carried over from one's childhood." Lost in these thoughts, I reached my aged patient and must have been well on the way to formulate the universal human element in the Oedipus legend as the correlate of the fate expressed in the oracles, for I then 'laid violent hands on' or 'made a mistake with reference to' the old woman."

Just what this means it would be difficult to say. It seems to mean that Professor Freud "unconsciously", i. e., symbolically, "laid violent hands on" ("assaulted") "the old woman" (i. e., the mother-imago) because his conscious mind was occupied with the thought of the universality of the Oedipus-complex, the fixed infantile love for one's mother. Why his conscious thought had to find "unconscious" expression he does not tell us, nor why the idea had to be expressed just in that way (putting the wrong solution into the old lady's eye. To make a mistake" may be expressed in



German in more than one way, e. g., "sich vergreifen", "einen Fehlgriff machen", etc.; why does Professor Freud select the locution which is capable of a dual meaning? Evidently, to vindicate a theory. And he does this notwithstanding his assertion that the Unconscious is wordless! But even if we grant him his conclusion that his "mistake" was a symbolic "assault", it does not follow that that assault was causally determined by his thoughts about the Oedipus-complex. Surely, "being in love" with one's mother is not synonymous with wanting to assault her! If in Professor Freud's psyche these are synonymous ideas we would understand—by the theory of somatization—how he might have "accidentally" struck the woman or pushed her off her chair, or something of the sort, but not how he came to put the wrong lotion in her eye. It would not be unimportant in this connection to inquire whether Dr. Freud's Oedipus-complex is stirred into action every time he sees an "old woman", whether treating old women always causes him to make a mistake, whether he had this peculiarity even before he had convinced himself of the universality of the Oedipus-complex, and, if not, why it had to happen that morning.

There is, furthermore, no logical reason for accepting Professor Freud's explanation as the only or as the correct explanation for his "mis-take." If we believed in an Unconscious, and if we chose to do so, we could "interpret" the lapse in at least two other ways, e. g., "I have made a mistake,—

that means that my Oedipus-theory is a mistake", or, "My mistake was harmless and my emotional reaction was unjustified; that means that I have no justification for being elated by my discovery and that the Oedipus-complex is quite incapable of having the harmful influence I attribute to it." Other "interpretations", unrelated to the Oedipus-complex, readily suggest themselves, e. g., "The old woman is a nuisance; I wish I were through with her and didn't have to treat such an uninteresting case", "I must learn to keep my eyes open and not make mistakes", "I am succeeding in hoodwinking (blinding) the old lady, inasmuch as this treatment is really worthless", etc.

*Example 50.*—In illustration of the alleged fact that the hands often betray what the person does not intend to express or even is not aware of, Professor Freud (*Psychop.*, p. 230) speaks of the great actress Eleanore Duse who, in one of her rôles, indulged in a very significant symptomatic action which, he says, shows "from what depths she drew her act." "It is a drama dealing with adultery; the wife had just been wrangling with her husband, and, lost in thought, stands to one side before the seducer enters. During this brief interval she plays with her wedding-ring, pulling it off, replacing it and finally taking it off again. She is ready now for the other man." Dr. E. Jones, too, (*l. c.*, p. 82) cites this example and makes the following comment on it, somewhat distorting Professor Freud's comment: "The action illustrates the profundity



of the great actress's character studies." It is almost needless to point out that both Professor Freud and Dr. Jones are in error in their inference about the profundity of the great actress's art. We all know that such "business" almost invariably emanates either from the brain of the dramatist or of the stage director and that the actor is responsible only for its execution.

But we are much more interested in ascertaining why Dr. Freud refers to the matter at all. He evidently thought it valuable material for proving his theory of "unconscious" mental processes which have a meaning and which can convey that meaning to others. Whoever devised that piece of "business" knew that the audience would understand it because of its obviousness. To every theatre-goer a marriage-ring is a symbol for marriage, and any fairly good actress can handle a marriage-ring in such a manner that, with the aid of appropriate facial expression and gesture, she can convey to the spectators the idea that she is playing with the thought of terminating the marriage bond or wishing that she had never entered into it (not that she was now ready for the seducer). This requires neither great skill in the actress nor unusual intelligence in the audience. As proof of unconscious mental processes the incident is wholly worthless. In fact, to understand a piece of business like the above, an audience does not exercise its Unconscious any more than when it sees an actor or actress silently and deliberately plucking the petals from a daisy. The spectators know

that the performer is saying to himself: "He loves me, he loves me not." In both instances—plucking the daisy apart and playing with the marriage ring—we are dealing with the somatization of a conscious idea, intentional in the former, unintentional in the latter.

Such "business" as Mme. Duse's playing with the marriage ring, or Malvolio making a gesture as if he were about to toy with his chain, or Miranda divulging her name "by accident", etc., is of value only if it is understood by the audience. If there were any likelihood that it would not be understood, the dramatist or the stage director would not trouble to write it or rehearse it. But their knowledge of human nature is such that they know that the average theatre-goer has sufficient intelligence, sufficient knowledge of himself, sufficient experience in reading the minds of his fellowmen, to understand the significance of such bits of "business" and such lapses. They do not think or believe that an actor will unconsciously and without understanding devise appropriate business which will convey a subtle "meaning" to an auditor who has no conscious idea of its significance or even that it has significance. Professor Freud evidently thinks so only because he believes that the Unconscious can do such things and can communicate itself to the Unconscious of others and produce effects "unconsciously." How complicated this may become is apparent from his theory that a poet, e. g., Shakespeare, may write something, e. g., "Hamlet",



without knowing what was inspiring him or to what he was giving expression, that the actors play it without knowing anything of what they are really expressing, and that the audience takes in and enjoys the performance without having the slightest idea of what it is that is giving them pleasure. With such assumptions a "critic" could read into a poem or a play anything he wished. Professor Freud thus reads the Oedipus-complex into "Hamlet." If we chose we could just as logically and just as convincingly and scientifically "prove" that Hamlet is giving "unconscious" expression to individual humanity's unexpressed and universal doubt about its being the offspring of its reputed parents, or a wish that it had been born into the animal or vegetable kingdom, or a fantasy of some day acquiring solely sovereign sway over the rest of mankind, or some other equally fantastic notion.

*Example 3.*—"A young woman fractures one of her legs in a carriage accident so that she is bedridden for several weeks; she attracts attention by the absence of complaints of pain and the calmness with which she bears her misfortune. This mishap ushers in a long and serious neurosis of which she is finally cured by psychoanalysis. During her treatment I discovered the circumstances surrounding the accident as well as certain impressions that had preceded it. The young woman and her jealous husband found themselves on her married sister's estate in the company of her numerous other brothers and sisters with their wives and husbands. One evening she

gave an exhibition of one of her talents before this intimate circle; she danced artistically the "cancan" and won great approval from her relatives but incurred the displeasure of her husband, who subsequently hissed into her ear: 'You have again behaved like a whore'. The words hit home; we shall not affirm that it was merely because of the dance. That night she slept restlessly and next forenoon she expressed a desire to go out driving. But she selected the horses herself, refused one team and asked for another. Her youngest sister wanted to send her baby along with its nurse for the drive; but she opposed this vehemently. During the drive she was nervous, kept telling the coachman that the horses were getting skittish, and when the restive horses really made some trouble for a moment, she jumped out of the carriage in fright and broke her leg, whereas those who had remained in the carriage were uninjured. Even if after the disclosure of these details it were possible to doubt that this accident was really contrived, we cannot but wonder at the skill which forced chance to mete out a punishment so fitted to the offense. For after this she could not dance the cancan for a long time." (*Psychopathologie*, pp. 199-200.)

Reading the above analysis, one gets the impression that Professor Freud believes that the unfortunate young woman's Unconscious knew in advance which horses would "make trouble" during the drive, knew that something would happen, did not wish the baby to be injured, knew that



none of the others in the carriage would jump, and knew that she would only break a leg. This is not only absurd but wholly unlike the repressed and infantile and immoral Unconscious with which Professor Freud has made us acquainted. For the vindication of the wish-fulfillment theory it is imperative to find a wish in the accident and this can be done only by endowing the Unconscious with the gift of prescience and interpreting the injury as punishment for a past offense. Inasmuch as nothing has been told us about the woman's moral code, her philosophy of life, we cannot even conjecture what she thought and felt about her husband's attitude and language. But it is inconceivable to us that an egoistic and egocentric and pleasure-loving Unconscious would accept her husband's point of view and punish her for something she did well and enjoyed doing. (That consciously she was a weakling and merely a parasite wife is evident from her submission to her husband's insults.) And isn't it a bit inconsistent with Professor Freud's theories that this woman's Unconscious disapproves of what meets with her conscious approval? We have been taught to expect the reverse of this, especially as dancing—and, above all, the "cancan"—is indubitably a combination of a coitus symbol plus exhibitionism plus muscular eroticism plus narcissism plus sadism (inciting in the beholders ungratifiable desires). A polymorph-perverse Unconscious ought to delight in such conduct and not punish the in-

nocent conscious offender by making her break her leg. Truly, this is perplexing in the extreme: conscious conduct is, according to Freud, determined by Unconscious motives,—and yet the Unconscious punishes the individual for conduct determined by it!

The Unconscious, we have been taught, is a wicked, a sinful, a perverted, an immoral Unconscious. And yet it also administers punitive justice! In other words, it fulfills a moral function. But if the Unconscious is the product of repression, and if only that is repressed which is morally and esthetically objectionable to the ego, how can it be the receptacle of moral forces of which the conscious individual—and the herd after whom he patterns his ego-ideal—approves. The difficulties implied in these questions, which are nowhere considered by Freud and his disciples, are responsible for some of the conflicts in the ranks of the psychoanalysts. Thus, for example, Dr. Stekel (in his essay on the "Masked Piety of the Neurotic") maintains that all obsessive phenomena are masked ("unconsciously" determined) prayers and all obsessive actions are "unconscious" rudiments of infantile religious beliefs. Silberer says (*Der Zufall*, p. 15): "The moralizing force of the Unconscious may manifest itself even more powerfully [than we see in Strindberg's life]; by means of apparent accidents it may inflict the most grievous punishments—as to our bodies and even as to life itself. Many an accident is a disguised attempt at



suicide or at least a form of chastisement; many a loss is to be interpreted as an act of penance." On page 13 he says: "The Unconscious may equally well be the more moral constituent of our ego than the unmoral." In a letter (January 8, 1922) he writes me: "For Freud there are no repressed moral forces. Experience, however, especially that of Stekel, seems to prove that there are moral tendencies which have, for some reason or other, been expelled from clear consciousness. Religious complexes (intimately linked with moral forces) seem to be especially subjected to this." And the Reverend Oscar Pfister's analyses leave no room for doubt that he often interprets symptoms as manifestations of unconscious moral forces, thus flatly contradicting one of the very fundamental doctrines on which the psychoanalytic theory is founded.

Had Professor Freud pursued a scientific course in his attempt to explain the neurotic woman's mishap, he would have inquired why she selected certain other horses, what experiences she had had with those horses previously, why she did not want the baby to accompany her, why she annoyed the coachman, why she permitted others of the company to accompany her, in what way the horses misbehaved, and, finally, why she jumped out of the carriage. In the absence of definite and full information on these matters his interpretation is, to say the least, wilful, arbitrary, unscientific and mystical.

That fracturing a leg is not a trivial

occurrence (and ought, therefore, not to be considered a symptomatic act) goes without saying. How could the Unconscious know that the fracture would not be a compound fracture, that there would not develop a serious infection or even tetanus which would terminate fatally?

For our part we cannot join Professor Freud in his ecstasy over "the skill which forced chance to mete out a punishment so fitted to the offense." Had the young woman fractured her skull and developed a hemiplegia we might have made the same comment, —it was in her head that the will to dance was engendered, or, at least, approved of. Dancing is not a matter merely of the legs. It does not seem to have occurred to Professor Freud that she could not have danced the cancan had she broken her neck or even only her arm.

*Example 4.*—We quote the following from Silberer (*l. c.*, p. 13): "A man who frequently suffers from profound depressions invariably finds his watch run-down in the morning if life seemed too unfriendly to him the night before. Freud reports two similar cases." Turning to Professor Freud's book (*l. c.*, p. 235) we find this: "A man overburdened with worries and occasionally subject to depression assured me that he regularly forgot to wind his watch at night if life seemed too hard and unfriendly to him. In the omission to wind his watch he expressed symbolically that it was a matter of indifference to him whether he lived the next day." The absurdity



of such interpretations is patent. A person who is in the habit of winding his watch at night *on retiring* will do so mechanically and automatically—unconsciously, in common parlance—day after day if his routine of undressing is not interfered with or if he is not too absorbed in an unusual train of thought. (In undressing all persons follow a definite and fixed routine.) An Unconscious wish for death has nothing to do with it. In this connection I may quote one of my patients: "I most often forget to wind my watch if I have been very busy with things that please me, very gay or pleasantly excited. Sometimes I forget when very tired; when unhappy or bored I don't forget."

A few days ago I returned home about one A. M., after an unusually pleasant evening spent with some friends. On entering the house, I found a very urgent summons immediately to visit my younger brother who had passed thru the crisis of a lobar pneumonia that very day, and who seemed suddenly to have changed for the worse during the evening. Anxiously I rushed to his bedside and found him in excellent condition. The "hurry call" had been the work of a meddling busy-body. Somewhat annoyed but greatly relieved I returned home, undressed for bed, and forgot to wind my watch. Why? Because while I was undressing I was answering my wife's questions about my brother and giving vent to my indignation for having had to go out on a fool's errand at that hour. The automatic action originating in a lesser

interest was crowded out by a greater.

On the night of April 23d, or the early morning hours of the 24th, I returned home from a lecture I had given on "the neuroses" at the Civic Club and proceeded to undress for bed. Notwithstanding the fact that I was in excellent spirits I forgot to wind my watch. Why? Because all during the process of undressing I was discussing with my son the lecture and the questions that had been propounded by the audience.

Patients have repeatedly assured me that they had observed absolutely no relationship between being depressed or weary of life and forgetting to wind their watch on going to bed. *Example 5.*—"That accidental actions are really purposeful will find greater credence in no other sphere than in sexual activities where the border line between these two kinds of action seems to disappear. That an apparently clumsy gesture may be very subtly utilized for sexual purposes I learned from a nice example of my own experience a few years ago. At the home of a friend I met a young girl visitor who aroused in me a liking which I had thought long dead and which now made me merry, loquacious and attentive. At the time I endeavored to find out how this came about; a year before this girl had left me quite cold. As the girl's uncle, a very old man, entered, both of us jumped up to bring him a chair which was standing in the corner of the room. She was more agile than I and also nearer to the object and thus got possession of the chair first and carried



it with its back towards her and both hands holding the edge of the seat. As I reached the chair after her, without giving up my desire to carry it to the old man, I found myself suddenly standing close behind her and both my arms embracing her from behind in such a manner that for a moment my hands met in front of her lap [i. e., in front of her genitals]. Naturally, I terminated the situation as quickly as it had arisen. No one present seemed to have noticed how dexterously I had taken advantage of this clumsy movement." *Psychopathologie*, p. 195).

By way of comment on the above we shall only say, without denying the sexual significance of the incident, that it remains to be proved that if the conscious Freud had not been capable of such conduct his Unconscious would have been capable of it. The same thing may be said of the following, reported by Dr. Stekel: "I enter a house and offer the lady of the house my right hand. In a most remarkable way I thereby loosen the bow which holds her loose morning-gown together. I am conscious of no dishonorable purpose; but, for all that, I executed the clumsy movement with the agility of a juggler." Silberer cites this example as an illustration of how the Unconscious sometimes acts as an enfant terrible. We can readily see that those who would excuse their misconduct and other defects or weaknesses of character by attributing these to such an enfant terrible would vehemently resent the denial of the Un-

conscious.

How the Unconscious operates occasionally is illustrated by the following occurrence:

A professional man who knew all about the Unconscious and believed in it implicitly was interviewing one of his female clients, a rather good looking, buxom, married woman. His chair was alongside of hers. While she was speaking, he was playfully holding her hand in his and stroking it gently. Lulled by her voice he "fell asleep," without, however, relinquishing his hold on the lady's hand. Then he must have begun to dream, for he sleepily and "unconsciously" guided the trusting hand to an erect phallus. When the client jerked her hand away he suddenly awoke. We haven't any doubt that in a case of this sort, if it were brought to court, a judge would dismiss the action on the ground that not the man but his Unconscious ought to be made the defendant. None the less, if such incidents as the above furnish us with valuable insight into the hidden verities of human character, as Professor Freud says they do, they are deserving of careful study.

*Example 6.*—To illustrate his point that one who observes humanity at table can discover many interesting and instructive symptomatic actions, Freud quotes the following from Dr. B. Dattner (*l. c.*, pp 226-227). "I am dining in a restaurant with my colleague H., a Doctor of Philosophy. He tells me about the hardships of the probationary period and incidentally informs me that before he had finished his studies



he had become secretary to the ambassador or rather the plenipotentiary extraordinary to Chili. 'But this Minister was then transferred and I did not present myself to his successor.' As he was saying this sentence he was carrying a piece of torte to his mouth but let it drop from his knife as if out of clumsiness. I grasp the hidden meaning of this symptomatic action immediately and casually remark to my colleague (who was unacquainted with psychoanalysis): 'There you lost a choice morsel!' But he does not notice that my words apply as well to his symptomatic action and with remarkable gusto and surprising animation he repeats the very words I had just uttered, exactly as if I had actually taken the words out of his mouth: 'Yes, that was really a choice morsel that I let fall', and then he unburdened himself by an exhaustive description of his clumsiness which had cost him this remunerative position.—The meaning of this symptomatic action becomes clear if we have in mind that my colleague was averse to telling me, an almost total stranger to him, of his precarious material situation, and his emerging thought assumed the guise of a symptomatic action which expresses symbolically what should have been concealed, thus affording the speaker relief from his Unconscious."

The above analysis is a typical illustration of the Freudian technique. It is quoted approvingly not only by Freud but also by Silberer (*l. c.*, p. 12), notwithstanding its utterly un-

scientific character and its worthlessness as proof of the existence of Unconscious mental processes. It will be noted that, as a matter of fact, we have no evidence whatever that Dr. H's material circumstances had been precarious and none that he wished to conceal such a fact from Dr. Dattner. And yet Dr. Dattner takes these essential facts for granted. Why does he so? Because without them he can not possibly read a wish into the assumed symptomatic action. And what is this wish? To relieve the speaker of the necessity of repressing a painful idea. But obviously if the painful idea was not present there was nothing to repress, and if there was nothing to repress the accident was not the symbolic expression of that idea.

It must furthermore be noted that Dr. Dattner did not question Dr. H., an almost total stranger, as to his material circumstances or as to whether he had intended to suppress the thought attributed to him, but took it for granted that he was dealing with a symptomatic action and on the strength of this assumption permitted himself to indulge in a clever pun (literally: There you let a choice morsel fall). That Dr. H. did not see the allusion to the piece of cake he had dropped is another one of Dr. Dattner's unwarranted assumptions. Why take it for granted that a Doctor of Philosophy would want to repress the fact that in his student days he had been hard up? Or must we also assume that his philosophy was as bad as his table manners?



Even if for the sake of argument we grant that the little mishap was a symptomatic action, what reason is there for the assumption or conclusion that it was the expression of an Unconscious wish or of the particular wish that Dr. Dattner reads into it? Absolutely none. With a little ingenuity a number of much more plausible Unconscious wishes could be devised for it. We may at this stage of our study also raise the question which we shall not answer at present, and which the Freudians have never considered: "Why must a symptomatic action be the expression of something in the Unconscious? Why may it not be the unintentional expression of something in the Conscious?" Suppose that Dr. H. had consciously thought of the fat morsel that he had let fall, might not that thought have so influenced the motor innervation of the muscles of his forearm, hand and fingers, that an incoordinated (trembling) movement would have thrown the piece of cake from his knife? Might not a little emotional disturbance emanating from Dr. H's recollected disappointment have caused his hand to tremble just enough to cause a poorly balanced piece of cake to fall from his knife? And why may not a momentary distraction of attention, e. g., by the entry of some person into the restaurant, have disturbed Dr. H's feat of balancing the cake on his knife?

But from our point of view a much more important question remains to be considered. Seeing that tort cannot

be safely eaten from a knife even by what American waiters call a "sword swallower," why must we assume that a Doctor of Philosophy in Vienna can perform the feat without occasionally dropping a precious morsel as a symptomatic action? (It may be of some significance in this connection that the English translation of Professor Freud's *Psychopathologie* makes no mention of the fact that Dr. H. ate his tort with a knife.)

*Example 7.*—In support of his belief that a symptomatic action may be a masked confession, Professor Freud (*l. c.*, p. 225) quotes the following analysis made by the Dutch physician Dr. J. E. G. Van Emden:

"As I was about to pay my bill in a little restaurant in Berlin, the waiter informed me that because of the war the price of a certain dish had been raised 10 Pfennig. To my question why this fact was not indicated on the price-list he replied that the omission was an oversight but that there was no doubt as to the fact. In sticking the money into his pocket he clumsily let a 10 Pfennig coin drop so that it fell on the table in front of me! "Now I am sure that you charged me too much. Do you want me to ask the cashier about it?" "Just a moment, please!" and he was gone. Naturally, I gave him the opportunity to get out of his predicament. Two minutes later he excused himself by asserting that in some incomprehensible manner he had mistaken my dish for another."

In other words, the waiter's con-



scious guilt made him unconsciously betray himself in order to free his burdened Unconscious! But there was nothing symbolic in the little accident and there is nothing to indicate that the waiter wanted to repress anything out of his conscious mind. What does appear to be quite clear is that the dishonest waiter was conscious of having been caught and was embarrassed and probably fearful of losing his job. This embarrassment may have been sufficient to cause such an incoordination in the activity of his hand and finger muscles as to cause him to drop a coin. Why it was ten Pfennig rather than some other coin that he dropped it were useless to speculate at this time. For aught we know to the contrary, Dr. Van Emden may have paid his bill in 10 Pfennig pieces and consequently the waiter could not have dropped a coin of another denomination. If the dishonest waiter held that particular coin in his hand with the object of returning it or for the purpose of concealing it in an inner, secret pocket, it would throw additional light on the actual mechanics of its fall and might relieve the analyst of the necessity of assuming that a pilfering waiter's conscienceless Unconscious is more honest than his Conscious.

*Example 8.*—"One evening an elderly colleague who does not like to lose at cards paid out without complaint, but in a peculiarly constrained manner, a rather large sum that he had lost. After his departure it is discovered that he has left in his chair practically everything he is in the hab-

it of carrying with him,—spectacles, cigar-case, and handkerchief. This is to be translated as follows: "You robbers, you have plundered me pretty thoroughly.'" (*Psychopathologie*, p. 234.)

As this is one of Professor Freud's own analyses we must consider it carefully. In the first place, then, no one likes to lose at cards, not even elderly medical colleagues. In the second place, no card player complains when he is paying for his losses; it would be bad sportsmanship and would do him no good. The constrained manner when paying out a large sum of money that one has lost in gambling is not such an unfamiliar phenomenon as to deserve especial mention or to call for an abstruse explanation. And, in the fourth place, we have not the slightest jot of reason for thinking that our amiable elderly colleague thought he had been robbed; we take it for granted that elderly medical colleagues in Vienna play honestly and think that their confreres do so. And, fifthly, the Doctor's forgetfulness might have been due to the lateness of the hour, his anxiety to rush home (all card players are in a great hurry after the game is over), his fear that his wife would find out how much he had lost and his irritation with himself for having lost so much or having played so badly. That he left his spectacles, etc., behind him and not his hat and coat is due to the fact that the latter articles one puts on almost automatically, whereas the former are called into action only occasionally and are there-



fore not so apt to be thought of when one is in a hurry and emotionally disturbed. And, sixthly and finally, his forgetting those things might just as well have meant—if we must give it an Unconscious meaning—that he wished to have a good excuse for coming back for another session, or that he wished to make sure not to lose his seat (upon which he had placed those articles during the game).

*Example 9*—Mr. P., a young attorney, returns home at 3 A. M. from a police court to which he had been hurriedly summoned by one of his clients. As he stands in front of the door to his apartment (where he is living with his mother) he sticks his hand in his pocket for his key and draws forth the key to the apartment of Miss K., his ex-fiancee. The psychoanalyst, following the example of Dr. Jones, would say that the mistake was symptomatic of Mr. P's desire to go to Miss K's apartment rather than his own. But the interpretation would be incorrect for the following reasons: Mr. P. and Miss K. had quarrelled and separated three months before; he had in the meantime fallen desperately in love with another woman (but without letting his mother know—her heart was set on Miss K.), and Miss K. had left town and given up her apartment. He had only two keys in his pocket, both Yale keys and looking and feeling very much alike. When he used Miss K's key often he could tell it from his own key by touch; but inasmuch as he had not been to Miss K's apartment for a

long time and as he was tired and sleepy so early in the morning, and his mind was occupied with his client's case, he did not stop to think about which key he wanted and drew forth the one that first presented itself to his hand—and it happened to be the wrong one. By the law of chance he was just as likely to lay his hand on the wrong key as on the right one.

How little the Unconscious has to be invoked to explain phenomena similar to the above is shown also by the following occurrence: if, while standing at the door to my apartment and intending to take the key out of my pocket, I happen to be thinking of a coin I had just given a mendicant in the street, I am very likely to take thence a coin of that denomination. Others have undoubtedly had similar experiences often enough. These are nothing more than what I have designated "somatizations."

*Example 10*.—Notwithstanding the fact that, owing to various causes, Mr. Silberer is persona non grata with the orthodox Freudians, he is such a staunch supporter of the theory of the Unconscious that we may quote one of his analyses of what he regards as an Unconsciously-determined symptomatic action. On page 9 of his little book (*Der Zufall*) he says:

"I found myself in (the town of) Ischl and thought with displeasure of having to terminate my agreeable sojourn there on account of an irksome visit in Aussee that I had promised to make. How does shrewd 'Chance' contrive to keep me two



days longer in Ischl? Suddenly my ring, a valuable jewel, disappears. I can't possibly depart without making a search. Was it stolen? Did I lose it? I advertised for it, promised a reward, set everything in motion for its recovery,—two days later I found the ring resting peacefully under a hollow candlestick in my room. The circumstances prove that my own hand played the trick,—anything more simple and inconspicuous would be unthinkable. And that what happened really had this meaning is confirmed by the circumstance that this ring bore a certain relationship to the person in Aussee."

The above analysis would be very pretty and might prove something about an Unconscious if we knew how the ring was lost, how it got under the candlestick, when Mr. Silberer thought with displeasure of his engagement in Aussee, why he forgot where he (or someone else?) had put the ring, how he (or someone else?) happened to find it and how it was related to the person in Aussee. In the absence of these data we can conjecture only that at some time Mr. Silberer, anxious to safeguard his precious ring, hid it under the hollow candlestick as the least likely place for anyone to find it. Why didn't he keep it on his finger? Was he afraid to let people see he had such a valuable ring on his person? Didn't he trust the inmates of the home in which he was stopping? Did he go to Aussee, after all? Surely the reader sees the relevance of these questions. If, Mr. Silberer hid the

ring in this unlikely hiding place isn't it natural that he too should have forgotten it? This we venture to assert is an everyday occurrence, and is due to the absence of fixed associative links between the object and the unusual hiding place. Under such circumstances one often hears a person say: "I hid it so well, I couldn't find it myself."

In connection with this analysis another important question remains to be answered: Why did Mr. Silberer's Unconscious not forget the engagement in Aussee rather than forget the unusual hiding place? Surely those two days spent in searching for the precious ring must have been very unpleasant days; and surely keeping the appointment in Aussee could not have been contemplated with a pain in any way comparable to the pain of losing that ring or worrying about it for two days. Or did the Unconscious know that in two days the ring would be discovered? When Mr. Silberer advertised for the ring, promised a reward, and set everything in motion for its recovery, was he only fooling his Unconscious? To be true to form and to the theory of psychoanalysis, Mr. Silberer should have been utterly unperturbed by the loss of his precious jewel and should have gone quietly about his business enjoying the delights of Ischl.

*Example 11.*—It would be difficult to find in psychoanalytic literature a more convincing example of the arbitrariness of the psychoanalysts' interpretations, of the unscientific meth-



ods pursued in their "investigations" and of the flimsiness of the materials upon which they base important conclusions, than the following analysis made by Professor Freud himself and presented to his students at the University as a model of technique and an introduction to the subject of "the Neuroses" (*A General Introduction*, pp. 212-213.):

"I have had the ordinary door between my waiting room and my office doubled and strengthened by a covering of felt. The purpose of this little arrangement cannot be doubted. It happens over and over again that patients whom I usher in out of the waiting-room omit to close the door behind them: in fact, they almost always leave both doors open. As soon as I notice this I insist rather gruffly that he or she go back and rectify the omission, even though it be an elegant gentleman or a lady in all her finery. This may give you an impression of misapplied pedantry. I have, in fact, occasionally discredited myself by such a demand, when the individual concerned was one of those who cannot even touch a door knob, and prefers to spare even his servants this contact. But most often I was right, for one who conducts himself in this way and leaves the door from the waiting-room into the physician's consulting-room open belongs to the rabble and deserves to be received in an unfriendly manner. Do not, I beg you, defend him until you have heard what follows. The fact is that a patient neglects to close the door only if he has

been alone in the waiting-room and has left an empty room behind him,—never when others, strangers, have been waiting with him. In the latter case he knows very well that it is to his interest not to be overheard while he is talking to the physician, and in that case he never omits to close both doors with care. This omission on the part of the patient is so determined that it becomes neither accidental nor meaningless, indeed, not even unimportant, for, as we shall see, it throws light on the relationship of the visitor to the physician. He is one of that great number who seek authority, who want to be dazzled, intimidated. Perhaps he had inquired by telephone as to what time he had best call, he had prepared himself to come on a crowd of suppliants somewhat like those in front of a branch milk station. He enters an empty and thereto extremely modestly furnished waiting-room, and he is disappointed. He must be compensated by the physician for the wasted respect that he had tendered him, and so—he omits to close the door between the reception room and the office. By so doing he virtually says to the physician: 'Oh well, there is no one here anyway, and probably no one will come as long as I am here.' Such a person would be quite unmannerly and supercilious during the consultation if his presumption were not at once restrained by a sharp reminder."

Critics of psychoanalysis have often objected that the interpretations of the analysts are unverifiable, are not



objective, and are too subjective to be of any other value than as indexes to the complexes of the analysts themselves. That these objections are valid and that the analyses teach us more about the analysts than about the patients are demonstratable with almost mathematical certainty by the above analysis, as we shall show in the following commentary on it:

1. Professor Freud informs us almost at the very beginning of his analysis (in the German version, not in the English translation published by Boni and Liveright!) that it is he himself who ushers the patient into his office. This being so, it is needless to say that the duty of closing the doors devolves upon him and not upon the patient. If he omits to close the doors, the patient, especially an elegant gentleman or lady, will leave those doors open, for they must take it for granted that he wants them open if he does not close them. If I leave the door to my office open after I have ushered in a patient it is because I want him to understand that his time is limited to a few minutes, that I do not expect him to make himself at home and that our interview is to be brief and informal and that matters of consequence are not to be discussed. For the patient to close the door(s) under such circumstances would be either a challenge to the physician or a decided breach of etiquette. If the incident is to be interpreted as evidence of bad breeding, is it the patient who is to be charged with it? When Professor Freud found

that "over and over again", "almost always," the patients omitted to close the doors he should have realized that the fault was in him.

2. We consider it extremely bad technique and an unfortunate attitude toward the neurotic to order him "gruffly" to close the door. A sympathetic attitude and a show of courtesy instead of militaristic arrogance, would be much more likely to win the patient's confidence and would conduce to a speedier rapport between invalid and physician. The true psychologist and psychotherapist would not be so resentful about a little matter of disrespect, perhaps due to nervousness, on the part of the patient; he would know that his business is only to ascertain what were the invalid's reasons for his apparent misconduct—when he is guilty of misconduct. An analyst who betrays such hypersensitiveness to such trifles proves to his patient that he is himself not complex-free and therefore not best qualified to help him. But this matter is of significance also as tending to show that Professor Freud treats his patients on the stern father principle and thus compels them to accept unquestioningly his dogmas and interpretations.

3. The wholly unnecessary reference to the elegance of the gentleman and the finery of the lady betrays a snobbishness in the analyst that is amazing and helps to account for the gruffness of his demeanor. This snobbishness is also borne out by the subsequent reference to the "extremely



modestly furnished waiting-room" as to which Professor Freud seems to be extremely sensitive. Incidentally it must be pointed out that Professor Freud takes it for granted, without any warrant, that the patient noticed or paid attention to the furnishings of the waiting-room. As a matter of fact most patients know that both abroad and here physicians' waiting-rooms are generally modestly furnished; it is the exceptionally well furnished sitting-room that attracts attention.

4. Needless to say, it is a manifestation of the utmost cruelty and non-understanding to order a person suffering from a door-knob phobia to close the door.

5. What does Professor Freud mean when he says that "most often he was right? What about the other times? What did he do when he was wrong? How did he know when he was wrong? What effect did that knowledge have on his conduct?

6. 'One who belongs to the rabble deserves to be treated in an unfriendly manner,' says Professor Freud. This is a philosophy of life with which we do not agree and a psychological attitude which we deplore. It is, to say the least, a bad example to set medical students who need to be taught first of all, that human understanding and human sympathy are the most helpful therapeutic measures to be employed in the treatment of the neurotic, whether he be one of the rabble, an elegant gentleman or a lady in all her finery.

7. "The fact is," says Professor Freud, "that a patient neglects to close the door only if he has been alone in the waiting-room and left an empty room behind him." That this is so only proves that the patient (who does not want an audience to his interview) closes the door after the Professor rather than leave it open. It is, in reality, a rebuke to the analyst for his bad manners.

8. The patient who omits to close the door is, we are told, one who seeks authority. Of course he is. Neurotics have a feeling of inferiority and they consider their ailments extremely complicated and difficult to cure; their experience with physicians, neurologists, psychoanalysts, chiropractors, Christian Scientists, New Thoughters, etc., have discouraged them so that ultimately they seek out the "big authorities." All this is true but it has nothing to do with their failure to close the door which the "big authority" has left open.

9. The idea that the neurotic expects to find a big crowd of suppliants in the Professor's waiting-room is a bit of facetiousness on Dr. Freud's part. He knows, surely he does, that a person who telephones to a prominent specialist to make an appointment for a definite hour does not expect to find any other patient there at that time. Besides, Dr. Freud has no right to take it for granted that the patient expected to find a crowd in the waiting-room; he should ask his patients about that.

10. Whether a person who omits



to close the door to the office would be unmannerly and supercilious during the consultation remains to be seen; it cannot be taken for granted. I have been treated most courteously by a patient who failed to remove his hat on entering my office and who kept his hat on during the entire session. I did not scold him or order him to remove his hat, inasmuch as I was interested in watching his behavior and trying to learn what motives determined his conduct.

11. In the above analysis Professor Freud took it for granted that his "elegant gentleman" or "lady in all her finery" was disappointed in the poor furnishings of the sitting-room and in the absence of a crowd of suppliants and that he or she was one of those who worship material success. On the basis of these assumptions and that the patient ought to close the door (which, in reality, the Doctor should have closed) he interpreted the omission to close the door as an insulting way of saying: 'No one will come as long as I am here.' That this is not the only interpretation possible even on the basis of Unconscious mental operations we propose to show by the following alternative interpretations:

a. "No one is likely to come into the waiting-room while I am here, inasmuch as my appointment is for one hour. The door may therefore remain open."

b. "If the Professor does not know enough to close the doors I shall not take it upon myself to teach him manners."

c. "This Professor is known throughout the world and is likely to charge me an exorbitant fee; I had better leave the door open as an avenue of escape."

d. "This psychoanalysis is said to be a very sexy affair and there is no telling what the Professor may try to do; I had better leave the door open," etc.

e. "The door may as well be open; I have nothing to tell of such a nature that the whole world may not hear it."

Any one of the above interpretations, and others could be suggested, is as incapable of proof or disproof as that offered us by Professor Freud. And therein is implied the fundamental error in the whole psychoanalytic technique: the interpretation is wholly subjective and dependent utterly upon the caprice of the interpreter.



# Nietzsche's "Zarathustra"

## A Psychoanalytic Study

By Leo Kaplan, Zürich

Were one to seek for the prototype of all psychic manifestations, it could not be more fittingly located than in the simple school of the ordinary association-experiment, in which the "subject" reacts to a certain word with a characteristic reply. The stimulus need not necessarily be a word; it may be any desired means that provokes a reaction.

Now, when we look deeper into this matter, it becomes evident that the reaction obtaining between reaction and stimulus is, in the majority of instances, by no means a simple one. A person may counter to the keyword "marriage" with the word "misfortune", or may react to such a colorless word as "table", with a sarcastic "blockhead." How are such cases to be explained? Clearly, the former is an instance where the subject betrays the gloomy thoughts which are at the moment dominant in him, whereas the latter case shows unvarnished mischievousness toward the experimenter. In other words, it is a safe generalization that, while reactions are provoked through stimuli, they depend in their nature upon the emotional as well as the mental states of the individual in question.

The manner in which one reacts to a definite event is, in the first instance, a

characteristic of the reagent. At the same time, the definite reaction of an individual can only then be used for purposes of characterization when we are fully acquainted with the *agent provocateur* as well. In brief, it is the *relation* between reaction and stimulus, at times a complicated one, which most completely describes and defines a given individual.

A thinker's philosophy of life may be reduced to the simple terms of a psychic reaction which can be rightly appraised only when it is brought into proper relationship to the provoking stimuli,—in this case, the cultural reality in which the philosopher has his being. Applying this point of view to Nietzsche's *zarathustra*, our first task is to become acquainted with the times that gave birth to *Zarathustra*. \* \* These times are not yet gone; they are still with us, we live in them. Times without pretensions, the period of petty men and petty deeds. The tradesman is its chief figure, and the shopkeeper's interests are the mainsprings of its social movement. And what are his heart's desires? To barter, to bargain, and to sleep the sleep of the just \* \* \* The tradesman's world is limited, he has no aspirations to high mountains and far-distant perspectives.

Zarathustra's own account of the



"spirit" of the times is a masterly portrayal:

"One has his little pleasures for the day and eke his pleasures for the night, —but health is duly honored."

"At peace with God and with thy neighbor,—sound sleep demands as much. And peace be, too, with thy neighbor's devil! Else he will haunt thee by night."

"Great honors I want not, nor treasures galore,—they injure the spleen. But one sleeps better with a good name and a little of this world's goods."

"And were one to possess all the virtues, one thing more he would have to know,—to send his virtues to bed at the right time."

In the year 1878 Nietzsche described his times in the following lines: "The adulteration of all intellectual ailment! The lethargy of all rational beings. Morality swaying unsteadily from right to wrong, and an inordinate lust to luxuriate in all that is coarse! The counterfeited sham of happiness!" (Cf. Elizabeth Forster-Nietzsche, *Das Leben Fr. Nietzsche's*, Leipzig, 1895-7, II, p. 127. —Hereafter to be cited as Nietzsche-biography.)

It is at such a period of spiritual and moral bankruptcy that this man of hypersensitive temperament is born. This is Nietzsche's own opinion of himself. "Shall I venture to allude to the last trait in my make-up that gives me no small trouble in my intercourse with mankind? I possess a perfectly uncanny *instinct of sensitiveness when it is a question of cleanliness*, so that I actually perceive—or rather smell—the propin-

quity, I might even say, the innermost being, the very 'bowels' of every soul.

\* \* \* This physiological sensitiveness has endowed me with psychological tentacles with which I touch and handle every secret,—*the heap of hidden filth that lies on the flooring of many a soul* \* \* \* *manifests itself to me almost at the first touch* \* \* \* This makes my intercourse with men no small test of patience; my humanity consists not so much in having a fellow-feeling for man as in enduring my sympathy for him." (Nietzsche-biography, II, p. 48). And so arises in him the "great loathing" and the "great yearning" which give birth to the prophetic figure of Zarathustra, the harbinger of a new great day.

Zarathustra rebukes the shopkeepers and calls to men of petty minds, "Are not your souls sheer poverty and filth and a pitiful craving for ease? I preach to you the superman. Man is a thing that should be overcome." And he proceeds to enlist the full idea of evolution in the service of ethics. "Man is a rope drawn taut between animal and superman" \* \* "Ye have made your way from earthworm to man's state, and much in you is yet sheer worm. Once were ye apes, and man does even out-ape the ape." The superman is the quintessence of earth. Let your will say: "*The superman must be the quintessence of earth!* Evolution has promoted the animal to man; evolution can and should not rest with man, it must progress and bear man beyond himself." (Even as an eightenn-year-old High School boy Nietzsche wrote, "For we scarcely know if mankind itself is not but a degree, an



incidental step in the universal scheme of development."—Nietzsche-biography, I, p. 375). It should be the goal of man's ethical behavior to carry on by *conscious* means what nature has *unconsciously* done for him.

The superman should not, as so often happens, be mistaken for the reckless elite. "The superman, in Nietzsche's conception, is a type,—not an individual, nor a solitary man. Not I or you should bear the name of free and superman \* \* \* but there is to come a time when we have all of us surmounted man." (Cf. R. M. Meyer, *Die Deutsche Literatur des 19 Jrh.* [The German Literature of the 19th Century] Berlin, 1910, II, 169). Young Nietzsche himself has put his idea of the superman in words that cannot be misunderstood. "That genius is dependent on other and higher laws than the ordinary man,—laws that often seem to clash with universal principles of right and morality but in the last analysis are identical with them,—is a phenomenon that forms the last link of a chain. For, just as genius is the summit of natural and intellectual harmony, from which man's aptitude sinks downward to the almost brutish crudity of savage tribes, so this apparent contradiction between the principles governing genius and the general laws of human conduct is but the topmost point of a gradual extension, running parallel with the progress attained in the intellectual development of man. (Nietzsche-biography, I, p. 312). Genius or superman is but an anticipation of what is destined to arise within the course of this evolution. Zarathustra is the man who looks toward the future.

The idea of the superman is the reac-

tion of the sensitive man to the realities of a petty bourgeoisie. But, in return, how does this idea work out when brought sharply face to face with these realities? The complacent and self-sufficient commoner cannot so easily be set in motion. And why, indeed, should he bestir himself to "overcome man"? His lot is quite tolerable. Not for him the sermon on the superman, the higher human-kind. Zarathustra is not the word for his benighted ears.

If now the "herd" refuses to follow, the preacher has no other recourse than to withdraw and gather a sect of "chosen few" about himself. And this is tantamount to a denial of the realities of life—introversion—and their gradual substitution by a life of fiction, a transcendental world.

It is important at this point to draw attention to the fact that originally man is autoerotic, self-sufficient. In the case of mature persons this autoeroticism is more or less suppressed and is supplanted by object-eroticism, wherein man experiences the need of another individual in order to complete his own happiness. A significant part of this object eroticism finds fitting expression in the sublimated form of love for one's fellowmen. With each great disappointment the wave of libido ebbs backward, the individual retires to solitude, and the Ego becomes its own love-object—narcism.

Zarathustra dwelt in the seclusion of the mountains, where he enjoyed communion with his own mind and wearied not thereof for the span of ten years. "At last, however, his heart experienced a change,—and he rose one morning with the early dawn, stood forth before the sun and spake to him in his wise: 'Thou



mighty planet! What would thy happiness be, hadst thou not those for whom thou art resplendent! Behold! I weary of my wisdom, even as the bee that hath too much honey culled; I yearn for hands to stretch forth toward me." But the hands have no desire to gather his honey, mankind needs not as yet his wisdom, and Zarathustra's hunger for love is destined for the time to remain unstilled.

Great is his disappointment, "An unappeased, unappeasable passion is within me and seeks to become vocal. A yearning for love is within me that speaks the very tongue of love \* \* \* But I dwell in my own light, *I swallow the flames that burst from within me.*" The disillusioned love for his fellowmen results in introversion; he shrinks from the world, withdraws into his own shell, and his own Ego is endowed with the attributes of libido. The direct effects of this retirement are the following: Just as the lover is apt to overestimate the object of his affections, so the auto-eroticist is likely to prize himself beyond sound measure. He lifts himself above the vulgar crowd, and believes that his own powers and perfections are sufficient to build the world anew. It is thus that Zarathustra speaks to his heart: "Thou goest thy own way of greatness, *here no one shall steal after thee.* Thy foot hath blotted out the path and *Impossible* is written o'er the road." "I am Zarathustra, the godless; where can I find my counterpart?" Zarathustra is the man apart, the "superman."

The tendency to seclusion seems to have been congenital with Nietzsche. We possess the following testimony to this effect, found in a juvenile autobiogra-

phy: "Even as a child I sought out solitude and felt most at ease when left alone undisturbed." (Nietzsche-autobiography, I, p. 30). It seems to me that this tendency was but confirmed and even accentuated through the untimely interruption of the intimate attachment which bound him to the love of his youthful playmates, Gustav and Wilhelm, particularly the latter. The time of this separation, brought about by young Nietzsche's departure for the High School at Pforta, has left behind the record of a characteristic anxiety dream: "The sun had just sunk behind the horizon when we left the dismal place. Soon the town, which despite the animated aspect fails to impress me pleasantly, lies in the rear of us; the gold-suffused sky with its warm celestial radiance, above us; and the stately cornfields, gently stirred by the mild breezes of the evening, at the side of us. 'O children', I exclaimed, 'is there a greater bliss than thus to wander through life? Friendship, loyalty, the perfumed breath of a glorious summer night, the fragrance of flowers and the glow of the setting sun! Your thoughts, do they not soar on high like larks encaptured? Do they not feel enthroned on golden-haloed clouds? Like a wondrous evening landscape, my life is spread—my days are clustered before me, there faint in the dusk of the twilight, here flushed with the radiant sunbeams.' A piercing outcry broke in on our meditation; It came from a nearby madhouse. Tighter and tighter our hands strained each other; as if the spirit of evil had brushed by with his ill-omened wings. No, *nothing shall tear us from each other*, none save the angel of death. Avaunt, ye powers of darkness!—Alas,



even this beauteous world must have its unfortunates." (Nietzsche-biography, I, p. 151).

The expert will have no difficulty in interpreting this dream. Nature herself is jubilant while the young boy is in the company of his friend. But evil powers propose to separate them. *The brusque interruption of his infantile affection binds the boy even closer to the object of his attachment and hinders all the more his assimilation to his environment.*

Nietzsche's sister bears witness to his isolation in his schooldays. "He was not particularly chummy with his classmates. The atmosphere of the Pforta High School itself, with its tradition trowning upon all intimate forms of address, was but little conducive to the formation of hasty friendships. Fritz, however, was ever instinctively averse to such impetuosity, more than was deemed good for him. Our mother worried quite a deal about his bent for seclusion, the more so as sometimes even his tutor alluded to it with apprehension." (Nietzsche-biography, I, p. 167). On the other hand, the boy was not always happy in his loneliness. "Ah, how much indeed needs one the consciousness of having true friends. *Solitude is now and then all too cheerless.*" But his diverse attempts to overcome his sad tendency were destined to bear no fruit. For between the recluse and the multitude there is no true understanding possible. Note in this connection the opinion of Moebius: "He was devoid of feeling for the most essential communal bonds, marriage and society. Nor is it by accident that he lacks the gregarious sense. He is a hermit by natural impulse." (*Das Pathologische bei Nietzsche* [The Pathologi-

cal in Nietzsche]. Wiesbaden, 1902, p. 30).

"It is we of lonely lives that require love, need friends", remarks Nietzsche somewhere, and his instinct is unerring, for out of his great desire the recluse too often turns a narcissist. "For ever One times One", concludes Zarathustra, "becomes in the long run two." The hermit projects his own individuality upon the screen of his consciousness, falls in love with himself, ends by becoming a twin-personality. He dwells in a double world, one of realities in which he is not fully domiciled, the other of fancy which he peoples with forms of his own imagination. In this transcendental sphere everything occurs to one's expectations: Zarathustra's cave among the mountains is visited by the "higher beings", the "great aspirants." They are "enlightened", they are carried away by Zarathustra's enthusiasm, they are thankful to him and pay homage to his superior spirit.

The narcissist is apt to overrate his self-importance. Hence the exceeding confidence, the faith in his own powers. Displace narcissism, and this omnipotence becomes God whom you honor and admire; your self-confidence yields to reliance upon an Almighty. Permit your narcissism to become ingrained, and you are the maker of your destinies. Small wonder then that, dwelling in an eyrie world of his own, Zarathustra calls himself godless. For, what need has the mighty Zarathustra of an almighty God? "God is dead"; in his new watchword, "Let the superman now live!" And the "higher beings"—amongst whom you can by all means reckon the one that killed this God—swear allegiance to Zarathustra,



and mock their former divinity,—they inscenate a parody in which they pay divine honors to the humble ass.

Viewed from a certain standpoint, mankind may be divided in two classes,—superman and herdmen. They differ from each other in the difference of the criteria which they apply to their manner of living. The perfect herdman's standard is his environment. "Conformity" is his watchword. He is cut on the same pattern as his fellowmen. He feels it incumbent upon him to imitate the time-honored model, to walk along the beaten track. "The power of custom", Zarathustra calls it the "spirit of inertia." Zarathustra, the solitary man, the superman, shouts with pride: "This—is *my path*—where is yours? I reply to them that *ask me* for the path. *The path*, namely,—does not exist! (Cf. also Leo Kaplan, *Psychoanalytische Probleme*, chapter XII).

How far from being a herdman Nietzsche was even in his childhood, is evident from the sketch of him left behind by his friend Wilhelm P—: "He had a very pious, inward-looking soul, and *was given over to meditation on many things that are strange fields to youths of his age.* \* \* \* *He used to invent games of his own.* He took a leader's part in all our games, and gave us new methods of playing them." (Nietzsche-biography, I, p. 32.)

The custom under which the common man is forced to live, is, in the last analysis, the expression of the past. Zarathustra, the superman, is thus at the same time an iconoclast. He demands that man be liberated from the shackles of tradition. "All *it was* should be transmuted, until the will speaks, *Thus did I*

*will it! So shall I want it.*" As an iconoclast, he is a converter of all values, a "breaker" but at the same time a creator. "And he that would be a maker in good and evil, verily he must first be a destroyer and shatter values. Thus *pairs the worst evil with the highest good*,—but this is the way of creation." The herdman may call all revolt against social realities a crime, and persecute it accordingly. But, despite this, it should not be forgotten that this "crime" conceals creative elements that assist at the birth of the morrow from the bowels of to-day.\*

Zarathustra loves to dwell on the future, the far-distant, for the sake of

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\*Moebius has been very *Marsh* with Nietzsche on the score of this principle, which he regards as the glorification of the criminal. Nietzsche's "great disgust with life" represents an attitude, he holds, which but too easily translates itself to an irreligious individuality that sees in criminals and dissenters so many champions of a new order against the existing one, and insists on the necessity of such a change. Need it be pointed out that Zarathustra does not condone the common criminal? Does not the fault lie rather with the petty souls that decry as crime and degeneration any attempt to reform the world? "That this tenet of Nietzsche has been thought to contain the elements of epicureanism and cynicism, is one of the most remarkable optical delusions in the history of human morals. There is no sterner judge of all anarchists, lawbreakers, and maudlin sentimentalists than Nietzsche." G. Simmel, *Fr. Nietzsche*, in *Zeitsch. für Philosophie*, Vol. CVII, p. 209.



which he is ready to sacrifice the present. "Oh, my brethren, not backward shall your noble soul yearn, but *ahead!* Banished and dispersed might ye be from all fatherlands and the lands of your forebears! Ye shall love the land of your offspring; this love shall be your new patent of nobility,—the undiscovered, beyond the farthest ocean! In the quest of this land I call upon your sails to seek and seek! *Upon your children shall ye make good that ye are your father's children, and thus redeem all that lies in the past!* This new table of values do I set over you!"

The important question occurs at this point as to the relation that obtains between existing social values and the powers latent in the unconscious. The progress of civilization has thus far, in the main, consisted in the circumstance that diverse original human impulses were declared "evil", and were accordingly repressed by the censorship of the psyche. These subdued impulses, rendered stronger and stronger in tension as the repression endures, seek every opportunity to overcome the forces that have relegated them to abeyance. Social conditions often create such opportunities, indicate the direction in which the pent-up emotions can be discharged. The present which Zarathustra contests is a child of the past, in the same sense as the men of one generation are the descendants of the previous generation. The feeling of dissatisfaction with one's forebears, the eternal infantile struggle against the paternal authority that takes place, consciously or unconsciously, in the life of every family, assumes thus a new aspect: man revolts against the commandment of the fathers and forebears, he is de-

termined to go his own way. *The actual social conditions mobilize the latent power of the unconscious in order to render it of service to their own purposes.*

"Love for the far-distant" was, before Zarathustra-Nietzsche appeared, announced by socialism as one of its goals. Modern socialism has put it in the form of the demand that all actions of the present be subordinated to the aims of the future, the conquest of the social power to the proletariat. But, in contradistinction to Zarathustra, socialism places its hopes not in a prophetic figure but in the might of a closely-knitted, class-conscious organization. The supreme power in this instance is neither the imaginary God, nor the personality of a prophet, but a definite, separated group, called in socialistic terminology, the "class." The solitary man is the perfect—purest—narcist; the herdsman is his perfect negation, as he has overcome narcism and relinquished omnipotence,—which represents a remarkable synthesis of the individual aloofness of Zarathustra with the gregarious instincts of herd mankind. The separatist, in our sense, is all-powerful only in his fantasy; in reality he is impotent. On the other hand, the herd possess physical power, but is devoid of effective will. The separate *group*, with its consciousness of omnipotence, is a perfect coalescence of the two imperfect tendencies, in that it unites in itself all the necessary weapons of the future victory.

In its initial stages, socialism was not far removed from the philosophy of Zarathustra. Witness the following characterization of E. Bernstein: "Every movement that does not seek to exert an immediate influence upon its environment, is



necessarily *sectarianism*; the movement and its adherents are removed from the realities about them \* \* \* But this was the very situation of the socialistic movement in the first half of the nineteenth century, as represented by the schools of Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, and even more recently by the followers of Louis Blanc and the Francois Vidal. They placed, either upon socialists at large or their own adherents, demands that stood the more or less strong contrast both with the conditions of the period and with the laws underlying the development of society. They also demanded from their followers *extraordinary qualities*. Every movement that is not in keeping with the spirit of the ego, needs *new types of man*. (E. Bernstein, *Die Arbeiter-Bewegung*. [The Labor Movement], p. 21).

The first Socialists were individualists who in their overweening enthusiasm believed themselves capable of redeeming mankind from its misery. Then, in the place of the individualists, appeared the separate grouping, the *chosen class*. This evolution of the individual man to the individual group is in reality one of the basic demands of Zarathustra: "Ye lonely of to-day! Ye separatists, ye shall grow a chosen folk,—and from this folk, the superman."

The meaning of the philosophy of Zarathustra-Nietzsche is clearly given in the first speech of Zarathustra:

OF THE THREE TRANSFORMATIONS:

Three transformations of the soul do I name unto you: how the soul turns to a camel, and to a lion the camel, and to a child, at last, the lion.

Much burden is there for the soul, the strong patient soul that is imbued with awe: his strength doth ask for bur-

den and more burden.

What is burdensome? thus asks the patient soul, so kneels he down, like unto the camel and begs for heavy loading \* \* \*

But in the lonely desert the second transformation takes place: to lion turns the soul, freedom would he gain, and lord it o'er his weary waste.

In the path of the lion lies "the mighty dragon", upon whose scales material values sparkle.

Which is the mighty dragon whom the soul no longer calls "lord" and "god"?

"Thou shalt", commands the mighty dragon. But the soul of the lion says, "I will."

New values to create—so much the lion dares not yet; but freedom to gain for new creation—this the lion's might doth dare.

But tell me, my brethren, what can the child do that e'en the lion failed to do? Why must the preying lion turn to child?

Innocence is the child and forgetfulness, a new start, a play, a wheel rolling out of itself, a first movement, *a holy affirmation*.

All moral standards are evoked by the necessities of the times. Time passes, but the standards continue to command blind obedience. It is thus, in the interests of a wholesome evolution, essential to revise our criteria from time to time, to undertake a "transvaluation of all values." Not, indeed, to replace them with dreary chaos, but to create a new moral order that is in keeping with the spirit of the times. The powerful *Nay* of the lion (the superman) must be followed by the holy *Yea* of the child.

[Translated by A. Green]



# Some Difficulties and Problems of the Psychologists of Religion

By Theodore Schroeder, *New York.*

In the material sciences it is no longer discreditable for an investigator to be conspicuously detached from all religions and to be, in his scientific work, obviously uninfluenced by any fear of being discredited or hope of being rewarded for supporting any system of religious thought. Perhaps an exception should be made for the very general fear of discrediting religious sex morality, or perhaps we ought not call sexology a material science. A different attitude appears to prevail in the study of the psychology of religion. Within this domain we encounter everywhere an emotional aversion,—a fear to impair the supposed influence of some religious thought, creed or institution. This fact constitutes the first problem, one of the fundamental problems, with which the psychologist of religion is confronted. Upon the understanding of that problem may depend our view of the scope, the method and the temper of our approach to the psychology of religion. If we fail to recognize and to overcome the influence of this fear we shall so far impair the scientific efficiency of our work. With this phase of the problem I begin my discussion.

## PREDISPOSITIONS OF SCIENTISTS

In the physical sciences temperament is at present of relatively little importance. Of course, it will still affect one's need for and the content of one's ultimate theory of things. But temperament will seldom make much, if any, difference as to the immediate thing to be done. An Oliver Lodge, with a strong mystical predisposition toward spiritism, will, on that account, have very little dispute about a practical chemical procedure. In the field of religious psychology, however, the situation is different, and more primitive. In the matter of religious experiences and their interpretation, the sum total of observable data having an obvious import is as yet relatively small, in comparison with the doubtful factors of their import. In the physical sciences we can more easily check up our predisposition by the use of our sense organs and by laboratory experimentation with material objectives. In religion we are dealing with feeling, ecstasies and other psychic material more difficult of direct sense observation, and accordingly more easily mis-interpreted so as to satisfy our temperamental need. Therefore, in the present state of ignor-



ance as to the psychology of religion, it is more true than in chemistry, that what we are going to do about it is determined by our antecedent emotional attitudes; that is, by our temperamental necessities. As our psychologic understanding enlarges, that newer understanding will doubtless become as much a part-determinant of future conduct, as knowledge of the conditions of chemical reactions has resulted in an important modification of the former alchemical temperamental predisposition.

In earlier stages of biologic science many used their knowledge of biology as a handmaid for serving the ancient theologies and cosmologies. Now relatively few do this and on the whole the development of biologic science has produced a large modification in the former interpretation of religious thought and feeling. Greater results may be expected with the achievement of more exact knowledge of religious psychology. In the meantime one of the most important factors in appraising the relative value of the work of psychologists of religion is to know the temperamental predisposition of the investigator, his attitude toward those mystical experiences and their mystical interpretations, which are of the very essence of the problem. According to my present view this attitude is to be judged, not by the individual's approval or disapproval of the mystical theory or creed, but by the psychologic *how* and the psychologic *why* of that sympathy or aversion. That we each have predispositions (prejudices) must be taken for granted. The important problem is to discover at what evolutionary level of desire and of mental process these prejudices are functioning.

### THE RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGIST

We have numerous *religious* psychologists, who make their psychologic intelligence a servant for their mysticism, instead of using it as a tool to unlock the hidden psychogenetic treasures, or as a corrective for immature mystical tendencies. They are more concerned to entrench the "spiritual" interpretation of "religious" ecstasies than they are to discover a possible relationship of these ecstasies to psychic erotism or to any other known factors of human causation. For them it is more important to fortify "faith" with special pleading, than to enlarge our psychogenetic understanding of "faith." Men of repute have written numerous friendly essays and books giving sympathetic and superficial descriptions of Christian mysticisms. Others have sought to supply a scientific psychologic support for Christian preconceptions, and to increase the efficiency of missionary effort. Still others have gathered and given us statistical information of religious data. This all has its value, though perhaps a very different value than that ascribed to it by these authors. At the beginning of new scientific endeavor, it is inevitable that there should be considerable such groping, somewhat beside the main issues. The regrettable feature is that thus far practically all the professional psychologists have seemingly been afraid of a critical psychogenetic study of religious experiences or of psychogenetic interpretations of these experiences.\*

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\*Van Teslaar J. S.: Problem and present status of Religious Psychology; Jour. of Relig. Psych. 7:214-36; Nov. 9, 14.



Neither has any one attempted to give us a standard for the classification of religious phenomena or of the psychologists of religion, according to any scale of evolutionary psychology. In short, a worthwhile (scientific) psychologist of religions is yet a matter of the future.

#### INFLUENCE OF FEAR PSYCHOLOGY

From the Freudian viewpoint, the psychogenetic contribution to this sensitive emotional regard and the extravagant valuation of mystical views will probably be found in the fear-psychology of the moralistic conflicts. These emotionalisms find their chief roots in the adolescent and pre-adolescent erotic turmoil. One aspect of that conflict is a feeling of inferiority. The urge for a neutralizer or compensation for this distressing feeling creates an efficient preparedness for the emotional identification of the sufferer with something that seems transcendental or supernatural. Therefore and thereby he attempts to justify a compensating phantasmal claim of superiority over his unregenerate fellows. The relative degree of morbidity of this inferiority-feeling becomes the determinant, and the exact measure, of the "value" attached to whatever interpretation is given to the so-called religious experience. Thus also it becomes the exact measure of the fearfulness often attaching itself to a psychogenetic study of religion, such as tends to discredit the emotional, transcendent valuations and associations.

In many persons this fear-psychology attaches itself, vaguely and indiscriminately as an aversion, to *all* effort at an understanding of religion and becomes a hatred of those who publicly offer such religious enlightenment. Accordingly,

this fearfulness and aversion may be attached to every attempt to study religious psychology by the objective method. It is sacrilege to do aught but achieve the mystic trance and indulge with pious awe and trembling solicitude in uncritical introspective study of religion. Toward the more rude investigators, this fear-psychology assumes varying degrees of aversion, from mild boredom through disgust to bitter hatred, in proportion to the intensity of the emotional disturbances underlying the fear.

In some instances this fear may fortify itself by means of misconception as to the *scope* of the psychologic investigation of religious experiences and beliefs. To others it will be more readily apparent that psychology of religions has no direct and immediate concern with the objective verity of religious concepts. The immediate concerns of the psychologists of religion may well be limited to these: (1) the psycho-genetic determinants of religious experiences and of their interpretations; (2) the psycho-evolutionary classification of the desires and mental processes involved in these experiences and in their interpretations; (3) the subjective and objective conditions of preparedness for experiencing religion, generally considered, as well as for particular persons, particular experiences, and particular interpretations of these. Thus limited, possibly some psychologists may recover their courage and poise. It may help some timid souls to be reminded that the mystically predisposed found no more difficulty in making God the creator of evolutionary law than their predecessors experienced in making Him the creator of a flat world with nothing as the raw material. So, too, if it should develop that all



mystical religious experience is largely psychic-erotic, they could still believe that a God was only using the reproductive mechanism as an instrument to His ends.

#### THE PREVALENCE OF FEAR PSYCHOLOGY

The student of religion finds this fear-psychology everywhere at work, even among psychoanalysts, whose professional work is to help others overcome morbid fear. Thus, Jung says: "It is thought to be much more beautiful to solve unnoticed an erotic tension, in elevated feelings of religious poetry in which perhaps many other people can find joy and consolation. One is wrong to storm against this conception from the radical standpoint of fanaticism for truth."\* Many lesser lights also fear to be charged with a "fanaticism for truth." These often declare that religion is a sublimation of sex. I believe this judgment to be the product of their own fear-psychology, and that in fact religion is but a false sublimation,\*\* a misleading appearance or pretense.

Sometimes I have flattered myself to have achieved a little of the attitude of relatively impersonal observer of the agonies and ecstasies of Christian mystics, who are wrestling with or for the "Holy Spirit." I have already published a part of my researches in that field.\*

\*Psychology of the Unconscious (trans. by Hinkle) p. 73.

\*\*See My: Religion not a true sublimation, soon to be published.

\*Revivals, Sex and Holy Ghost. Jour. of Abnormal Psychology, 14 (No. 1-2): 34-47; Apr.-July, 1919.—Heavily Bridegrooms, *Alienist and neurologist* 1915-1917. Reprint contains bibliography of my contribution to the erotogenic interpretation of religion.

One may therefore imagine my surprise on finding that so eminent a religious psychologist as Prof. George A. Coe, considers persons of my type perverted, "strangely perverted." He says: "his nature must be strangely perverted who can behold a soul struggling in any fashion to reach the ear of God and not feel his own soul's desire mingling with that of the suppliant."\* I have published evidence tending to show that these agonies, for which Prof Coe has such keen sympathy, or only emotional conflicts, psycherotic in essence and origin. Because of the fear and shame of sex (the personal sexuality), the religionist usually excludes it from consciousness. Even when he is conscious of it, fear will usually compell him passionately to disavow the fact. Only in extreme cases does it find expression in sexual apotheosis, e. g., among Mormons,\*\* Bible communists, and in some celibate societies.

Doubtless there are some workers in the domain of the psychology of religion who must label such an attitude as mine as something even more discreditable than does Prof. Coe. After discussing persons who take my attitude, Prof. William James expresses the "wish that all this medical materialism could be made to hold its tongue." Professor Edward I. Ames is more elaborate and

\*"Religious Experience and Scientific Movement," p. 53.

\*\*"Sexual determinant in Mormon 'theology.'" *Alienist and Neurologist* 29: 208-22; May 1908; Trans. *Imago*, 3: 197-204; Apr. 1914; Abstracted with other like matter in *Psychoanalytic Review*, 3: 223-230, Apr. 1916.



more mystifying in his opposition to a thorough investigation of religious experience. He divides all humans into the following classes:

1. Those who lack mentality as generally pathologic types; 2. Irresponsible and inconsequential persons not defective or diseased; 3. Criminal classes; 4. Religious persons with or without mystical experience.\* In his uncritical sentimentalism all people are of two kinds: either mentally or socially defective, or religionists. My own opinion of myself is that I am "cured" of religion without being essentially defective. My opinion of Dr. Ames is that his conception of psychic evolution is as inadequate as his opinions about the differential essence of religion are immature.\*\*

#### QUALIFICATION FOR PSYCHOLOGIST OF RELIGION

Those who must discredit the absence of passion in the genetic study of religious psychology are to be found chiefly among the old school of psychologists who have emotional resistance to a Freudian delving into the subconscious, —the same resistances which they manifest toward a psychogenetic study of religious experiences. Perhaps the likeness of these manifestations of resistance is due to an identity of their origin.

In this connection I wish to emphasize that from my viewpoint no one is adequately qualified for a psychogenetic study of religious experiences or the varying interpretations of these, unless he

\* "Psychology of Religious Experience," Chap. 19

\*\*See my "Differential Essence of Religion." Reprint from *Truth Seeker*, 41: 689-90; 70617; 726-7. Oct.-Nov. 1914.

have the two following qualifications, namely; First: there must be that large acquaintance with the mental and emotional mechanisms which is characteristic of psychoanalytical investigations. Especially important is the knowledge of such of one's own erotic impulses as are usually working below the surface of consciousness; Secondly: there must be that relatively complete self-knowledge which results in a state approaching complete shamelessness both in regard to the whole and to every part of our personal erotism and any possible relation of this or any other aspect or element or determinant thereof, which may be incorporated into the personal religious experience. One is adequately qualified for a psychogenetic study of religions, only when one has attained a sufficiently detached view of all the known and unknown operations of the personal erotic impulses, so as to enable one to discuss them publicly without the least emotional disturbance. That is to say: one must have the same scientific calmness toward the whole of one's sexuality and be able to discuss it publicly with the same impersonality and shamelessness that usually accompanies a discussion of mathematics. It is only then that one can discuss the psychogenetics of religion in the true scientific spirit.

#### DATA OF RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

In spite of an obvious bias toward Christian mysticism, even those who have outgrown the more primitive attitude toward religion will agree with the spirit, if not with the letter, of the following quotation from Prof. Coe: "The (religious) experiences have the same scientific standing as any other experience. They are neither priestly functions nor the imaginings of enthusiasts, but facts of observation. As such they



may serve as data for a science of religion or of theology. A truly scientific (study of?) theology is just as possible as a scientific philology." And again: "If it takes years of strenuous labor to become a competent judge of diseases, or of Chaucer, or of the dative case in Latin, of how much value are our guesses and fads in theology? Facts of experience are relatively abiding while explanations are shifting."\*

Obviously the data of religious psychology are: (1) the varied facts of religious emotions in action, and as recorded by the mystics of the past. (2). The varied self-interpretations of these experiences. Obviously the most intelligent of mystics can never give us more than an efficient description of what it is that they experience. If the mystic's interpretation of his experience is taken as itself a solution or as being conclusive, then there can be no psychologic problems to investigate or to discuss. Furthermore, if we achieve the problem-attitude toward mystical experience one cannot accept as final the mystic's self-interpretation. The mystic's interpretation of his experience is as much a part of the data of religious psychology as the experience itself. These self-interpretations are no more final than the confessions of witches or wizards, nor than the self diagnosis of the insane. These self interpretations are an important and essential part of the problem to be investigated. In giving expression to their experiences these religious persons have used various symbolisms and various languages. In primitive man they found expression in the crude idols, altars, sacrifices, and ceremonies, so large-

ly founded in phallic worship. Later came word-symbols and more abstract ideas and creeds. The cruder physical manifestations of sex as objects of worship were giving way to the spiritualization of the inseparably related psychic aspect of sex-ecstasy. So, through the interpretation of these perhaps, came primitive metaphysics, and innumerable theologies, all of which were intellectualizations of the varied necessities of the autonomic system. So much of tentative generalization is, I think, warranted by my past studies of the subject and by psychanalytic disclosures.

#### PROGRESSIVE RATIONALIZATION

After a wider contact with and understanding of nature's forces, it became necessary for more persons to reformulate the metaphysical and theologic speculations in order to insure a greater conformity with the result of advancing scientific research. Thus each inspired and infallible utterance becomes in its turn the fable or myth or the forgotten phantasy of the past. Theology and mysticism recede as our understanding of nature grows, provided that understanding is used as a corrective in the rationalizations of our more primitive intellectualizations. "Facts of experience are relatively abiding, while explanations are shifting."

Perhaps some day we may be able to classify these explanations according to an evolutionary concept of the psyche. Perhaps also we may achieve such an explanation as will place religious experiences on the same footing as nature's physical forces. Then we will limit ourselves to the study of the law of its behavior. When in addition to this we have outgrown our fears, and the consequent need for neutralizers it is possible that

\*"Religious Experience and the Scientific Movement", pp. 49-15-51.



we may even eliminate all religious or supernatural interpretations. But that result will be only incidental to such psychologic investigations. Then also we may achieve such an understanding of the genesis and determinants of our temperamental predispositions and these determinants will be seen in an evolutionary setting. Thus we may achieve a stage of development which will accelerate the decay of all those desires and mental processes which have heretofore produced metaphysics and theologies. Whether or not this is the goal to be aimed at, the matter to be studied and understood is the actual experiences of those "who know because they feel and who are firmly convinced because strongly agitated."

#### PSYCHOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

It seems probable that temperaments determine our approach, our predisposition and, measurably, the result of our study of religious phenomena, as of all other matters. Obviously Professor Coe, who finds "his own soul's desire mingling with that of the suppliant", is predetermined to interpret any given religious experience very differently than I (with my "strangely perverted nature") will interpret them. Thus it becomes obvious that we will never reach a substantial agreement upon the real import of religious experience until and unless we have an equally thorough understanding of the temperaments of the interpreting mystics or psychologists. This then means that a psychologic study of the religious experience will ultimately include a scientific understanding of human nature as it expresses itself in the

psychologic observer and in religious exercises. That means that we must study the genetics, determinants, and evolution of temperament as supplying the probable elements of unification in human nature. Thus we may hope to acquire a general standard by which to classify individual predispositions. Not having arrived at that stage in the development of religious psychology, we are each of us groping in our own little tunnel, seeking the light.

At its best this means that we have just as much need for understanding the psychologic imperative of the psychologist of religions as of the mystical interpreter of his own religious experience. Persons of Professor Coe's temperament will be tempted to use their scientific skill as psychologists to bolster up many popular religious preconceptions. Their psychologic insight will be colored in the same way and by the same method as is the interpretation of religious experience by the experiencer. It all becomes more thoroughly a matter of time, place, and circumstance. This means that, more than Billy Sunday, Professor Coe will seek to rationalize theology into a greater relative conformity with what is known of nature and her ways.

One with a "strangely perverted" nature like my own will perhaps tend to "pervert" religion as a whole, or work to have humanity outgrow the desire emotional need—for it. However, psychologists of the temperament of Professor Coe, and especially those who must give more emotional value to their mystical interpretation, must strenuously resist everything which might



tend to make mankind outgrow the religious stage of development. Some will, no doubt, ascribe my attitude to the machinations of Satan, and my method may be dubbed "malicious animal magnetism." From my viewpoint, I am only defending a different group of avertive and acquisitive necessities of the automatic system than those which control Professor Coe. From another point of view, it remains to be determined which of us is functioning at the higher level of evolution in desire and in mental processes, and which of us is doing most to accelerate intellectual and spiritual evolution in others.

#### SPIRITUAL LOVE AND "PERVERTED NATURE"

I have, as is evident, no religious interest to defend. From the viewpoint of the mystic I will be classified as irreligious or anti-religious. I believe that I am impelled merely by a desire to understand religious experiences and the interpretations of these by the religionist as a problem of the behavior of the psyche; not as the behavior of a God or a ghost; not in terms of theology or teleology. I am impelled to study the data of religious experience in order that I may interpret it by a more thorough correlation to that which is already understood of nature and her ways. I study the multifarious variety in the data of religious experience to discover the elements of their unification, as manifestations which are to be interpreted in terms of something else already known or knowable of the human machine. As seen from my present study and stage

of development, the one element of religious unification is the attempt to "Spiritualize" love by ascribing it to a super-human cause. The next problem is to discover the factors of likeness and unlikeness between the spiritual love of religious mystics and the psychic aspects of the fleshly love of those who have been labeled "strangely perverted" human beings.

#### THE GENETIC APPROACH

Now other problems arise. How, for instance, is the fact to be explained that religious experiences differ in intensity? Is the cause of this difference transcendent or immanent? In either case, is it a matter of greater "spirituality" or sensuality? Then, just what is the differential psychologic essence of such spirituality? Are these differences co-related to the differences in the degree of the repression of human cravings, based upon or expressed in indifferences in organic sexual tension? Or in psycho-erotic necessity? We find a great variety in the results and in the processes by which human beings intellectualize and rationalize religious experiences which in their psychologic aspect seem to be much alike and are similarly described. What then are the factors which determine, or predetermine, these particular and varying intellectualizations? Why, for example, does one person ascribe to God an experience undistinguishable from another experience that he explains as merely a part of the machinations of the body? Let us present the matter concretely. When Professor Coe and I look upon a "soul struggling to reach the ear of



God", he may see therein a manifestation of, or a craving for, divine or spiritual love. I may see in it only a more or less unconscious urge or craving for a sex mate, or for a psychic orgasm. Then the psycho-genetic problem between us may become this: What differences of sexual indulgence or repression, of fear, shame, contentment or unsatisfied longing,—what differences of erotic sensitivity, or of feelings of inferiority resulting from any of these past states or experiences,—are there between us which makes "his own soul's desire mingle with that of the suppliant", and leaves me cold and unmoved? As between religionists giving to similar religious experiences various and conflicting interpretations, what is the psychogenesis of these differences of interpretation? What is there in the way of differences in affective disturbance in the past which continue to operate in the present and which determine these choices of interpretation or determine the necessity for a "spiritual" interpretation? By "spiritual" we mean something superphysical or extraphysical in contrast with the mere psychic aspect of the physical functioning of the human machine.

#### TOWARD THE EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH

Assuming that our previous researches have disclosed the psychogenetics which compel such diametrically opposite predispositions for persons viewing identical religious phenomena, then new problems are presented. How can we co-relate and unify the conflicting viewpoints and interpretations of scientific observers? I hope that persons whose souls desire to

minge with the suppliant struggling to reach the ear of God are just as human as the rest of us who are said to have a "strangely perverse" nature. If they are, then these very diverse temperaments must have some elements of human unification. Our problem then is to find the elements of unification. To that end we must acquire a common yardstick by which to classify such varying temperaments. What shall the yardstick be? Many pious souls will answer: "The word of God is the only standard." I ask which of the many conflicting words of God?

#### TOWARD AN EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

Here a new problem presents itself. Psychogenetically why is one person compelled to accept and another to reject a given utterance as the word of God? Again, our answer is, the aversions and cravings, as well as the mental processes involved in the intellectualizations and rationalizations of human cravings and human religious experience. Thus we may find the elements of unification between the interpretation of religious experiences by persons of scientific endeavor and by those of wholly mystical predispositions. Then we may compare these with other desires and mental processes. By studying and comparing these as they occur in the course of racial and of individual development we may form a concept of the past evolution of desires and of mental processes, and the materials employed therein, and the uses to which these are put. From a concept of retrospective evolution thus formed we may also formulate a tentative hy-



pothesis of the prospective evolution of desires and of mental processes. This larger evolutionary concept will probably yield us the criteria for arranging the materials of a comparative study of the religionists interpretations of religious experiences. In this process we may achieve a like standard for the evolutionary classification of secular thinking, and even of religious psychologists. The same evolutionary yardstick may enable us to make an evolutionary grouping of all religious processes as compared with some secular mental methods. So far as my studies in this direction have enabled me to see, this line of investigation tends to the conviction that *all* religion, even at its highest evolution is still the product of relatively immature desires and of immature mental processes, when compared with the desires and mental processes involved in the work and achievements of the more advanced of the material sciences.

Having organized the existing diverse religious mentalities by means of an evolutionary concept of the psyche, we are prepared for the next step. From a concept of retrospective psychic evolution, we may be able to construct a tentative concept of prospective psychic evolution, in desires and in mental processes. This of course will at first be crude and very tentative, and will need very much correction as time and further observation supply more data to be co-ordinated into a single synthesis.

Thus we will also come to a more refined and clarified view of the scientific method, through viewing it in part as a problem of the psychogenetics and of the psycho-evolutionary status, evidenced in

the particular ways of conceiving and of using the scientific method. This will inevitably lead us also to an evolutionary classification of the mentality of scientists. Surely, it must be of importance for us to be able to determine the relative development and evolutionary grouping of men like Oliver Lodge and Ernest Haeckel. It is possible that persons professing the same beliefs about religion, as for example Robert Ingersoll and Herbert Spencer, may be found to be as far removed from one another in an evolutionary scale, as St. Paul is perhaps more infantile than Prof. Coe.

#### IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

It has been found by many that insanity is the most fruitful field for observing mental mechanisms. Because of its morbid, exaggerated undeveloped intellectualizations of present day infantilisms in religion and politics we may find in insanities the best example of how our desires and mental processes have functioned in the retardation of human progress. So also we may possibly find in religion, and perhaps better than elsewhere, examples of how our mental machinery should not function, if we really desire to accelerate mental evolution in the sense of maturing our desires and our mental processes. It is from such considerations that I esteem the psychogenetic and psycho-evolutionary study of religious experiences, their development and their interpretations, materials of the very highest importance. These then are the main difficulties, problems and prospects that I can see for the workers in the field of Psychology of Religions.



# Anagogic Psychoanalysis

By Dr. E. von Geijerstamm, Göteborg

## [Conclusion]

We know full well that in real life persons do love inferior objectives. But we also know how troublesome this may prove. The classical example is that of a man charmed by some Siren or by a meritorious woman linked to a worthless male. This theme, though in a milder form, plays a great rôle in neurosis.

A short time ago I analyzed a 50-year old woman whose husband manifests some obvious neurotic traits. One of her dreams was as follows:

"I put away some handwork. Heard the physician's voice inquiring which hand I use in sewing. I answered: the left one! Thought it was essential to know this in order properly to appraise my work."

Some twelve years previously her parents had forbidden her to join a skating club, because they feared that she would be exposed to flirting, for which they thought she had a rather strong inclination. She felt so hurt at that and found the accusation so unfair that she gave her skates away and never indulged in the sport again, although she had previously enjoyed it very much. She thus fused flirting, love, skating and the love of life and work; and that increased her temperamentally pre-determined neuro-

tic disposition. At about that time she had her first menstruation and for years afterwards she suffered from headaches at the menstrual period. I need hardly add that the headaches had been looked upon right along as due to physical causes. (Incidentally I may point out that the neurotic symptoms which occur about the menstrual period are to this day looked upon as physical, although the modern view has been known to gynecologists since the early 90's; Prof. Lahlin so far as I know, was the first in Sweden to introduce the new view although older hypnotherapeutist had already found that such symptoms yield to treatment. Mothers teach their daughters to be very careful during the menstrual period, i. e., young girls are taught to behave neurotically at such times. In common parlance the condition is called significantly, "being unwell.")

In her childhood this patient had been in the habit of winding yarn with the left hand, and her mother had taken great pains to break her of that habit. As an adult she shuffled cards with the left hand. Long before the skates episode the mother surprised her once in the act of masturbating and told her it was a deadly sin. The patient was



worried as she told me the incident about masturbation, something she had never had the courage to tell her husband. She also revealed some thoughts which she believed involved lack of loyalty towards her husband though the revelations were rather harmless. One of these memories concerned a certain man who felt "an unrequited erotic attraction" for her; but he was a man capable of "understanding her better than her husband." This naturally led to a conflict; she reproduced this episode, years after its occurrence and long after it had become a thing dead and buried, according to her belief, because, viewed anagogically, these phantasies of disloyalty were transferred upon the analyst who was "capable of understanding her better than her husband." She conceived it to be a sort of disloyal act towards the latter to confess during the analysis.

The fact was that she saw only too clearly her husband's neurotic peculiarities. She suffered on account of her own erotic emotions for him, as she believed. As a matter of fact, she suffered because she saw in him a reflection of her own neurosis. The neurotic prides himself on seeing clearly. The neurotic certainly has a sharp eye for the shadowy side of reality. The stronger her neurosis the more clearly she perceived her husband's neurosis and she punished herself unconsciously through the perception of what she saw in him.

That is one reason why the neurotic's cure is difficult. Healthy love is proverbially blind. When the period of acute love is over the healthy-minded person perceives clearly the partner's short-

comings but does not torture himself by dwelling unduly on them. The patient's notion that it was disloyal to go through the analysis was a sign of resistance.

She did not find it easy to act disloyally towards her own, weaker tendencies which refused to allow surface expression to the love of life buried in the unconscious. She might be induced to see that only through such betrayal may the good be brought out in her relations with the husband.

The handwork which she put aside in the dream referred, consequently, to masturbation, flirting, skating, work, love of life. Being left-handed was a reference to her phantasies of disloyalty which, as we have seen, were really due to the joy of life and work; it was also a reference to her mother forbidding her to use the left hand and forbidding her to masturbate.

It is also noteworthy that on the day before the dream she had been in the company of a left-handed acquaintance, whom she described as being of the extreme progressive type but also as being a representative of sobriety and tedious prosiness. Hence the fusion of spiritual health and tediousness. Consequently, "left" means one's progressive trends. If we limit ourselves to the sexual meaning of this dream there is little more than unfaithfulness to be found, which is this subject's form of transference. It is a fact that the fancies of disloyalty were repressed and preserved in the unconscious where they became linked with the unconscious love of life, with that primordial trend which Freud calls "the immortal wish in the unconscious",



(*Traumdeutung*, p. 436) and upon their bobbing up in consciousness again they assumed a different meaning.

In my opinion, that, approximately, is the manner in which the Freudian theory of the origin of symptoms in connection with the repression of forbidden wishes may be explained upon an anagogic basis.

Freud also holds that the forbidden wish itself tries to break forth into consciousness, whereas, according to the interpretation indicated above, this tendency belongs to other trends, trends of a progressive character.

Freud (*l.c.*, pp. 190, 344) mentions as an illustration of how coarse and selfish feelings may be masked under tender solicitude for others the following dream of his own:

"My friend Otto looks poorly; his face is dark and his eyes are bulging."

Friend Otto was his house physician to whom Freud felt himself indebted for years on account of the great care the latter had taken of the health of Freud's children. On the day before the dream Freud's wife drew his attention to the fact that Otto looked tired and seemed to be under some strain. The symptoms of Basedow's disease, which the dream portrays, suggested the following data to Freud:

Six years before that dream he had journeyed in the dark through a forest, accompanied among others by Prof. R. The carriage broke down and they had to stay over night in a neighboring hotel. There they were given special attention on account of their experience, and a certain Baron L., among others, inquired whether he could do anything for them. Prof. R. answered that he desired only

the loan of a nightgown. Baron L. expressed regrets over his inability to provide one. This Baron showed pronounced Basedow symptoms.

Another association to Basedow: This is also the name of a prominent educator. Freud interprets the dream as follows: "Friend Otto happens to be the one whom I had asked to watch over my children's physical training, especially during the pubertal period, (hence the night-shirt) in case anything should happen to me. Seeing my friend Otto in the dream with the symptoms of that noble would-be helper, obviously, is as much as to say: "Should anything happen to me there would be as little aid coming from him as we had received from L., in spite of the latter's warm offer. Now we uncover the egoistic import of that dream."

The wish-fulfillment of this dream Freud explains as follows: Since friend Otto is represented as Baron L., and since Freud requests something of Otto (care of the children) just as Prof. R. had asked something of Baron L. after the accident, it shows, according to Freud, that he himself is identified with Prof. R. in that dream. "Prof. R., like myself, has followed an independent path outside the school and has attained his richly deserved title only in late years. Thus again I want to be a Professor. Indeed, even the expression 'in late years' is a wish-fulfillment, for it implies that I shall live long enough to carry my children through their puberty period."

In another connection, referring to the same dream, Freud says:

"The identification with Prof. R. must be an ever present readiness in the un-



conscious, for it corresponds to one of the undying infantile wishes, the wish to be great."

This interpretation is thoroughly characteristic of Freud. That a man who has met with sharpest opposition from official authorities on account of his life work should dream of an official position, obviously may be called a wish-fulfillment; but it may also be looked upon merely as a sign of progressive striving. Sometimes these two concepts coincide. But I am unable to see therein anything relative to the infantile wish for greatness. On the contrary, I perceive therein a proof that the infantile in the dream is merely the form assumed by the unobstructed striving of the unconscious. The little boy dreams of being grown up, a man like Freud dreams that his doctrines are winning official recognition.

Regarding friend Otto's significance in the dream, Freud expresses himself as follows: "Ugly thoughts hidden from consciousness during waking activity have used this opportunity to find expression, but the cares of the day, too, attain expression through a substitution in the dream content. The waking thought, which far from being a wish, embodied a worry, had to become linked in some manner to some infantile wish, repressed and unconscious . . . The greater the worry the stronger also the established link; between the wish and the worry there need be no relationship contextually, and there was none in our case."

On my part I must conclude that there must have been a real and fairly intimate relationship between the dream-fulfilled wish and his concern over the friend's state of health.

Freud's attention had been called to his friend's state of health on the day before the dream. The natural consequence is that should Otto become ill, the latter would not be able to take care of Freud's children. This thought I do not, offhand, consider vicious. Subjectively the children are Freud's life work which he might not have the power to carry to success. Every man harbors such a weaker self in his breast and, according to my opinion, that is what friend Otto represents in the dream. There seems to be no need for such a round-about and ingenious construction as is required by Freud's interpretation of this dream in order to bring out the relations between the respective wish (to be a professor, to have his doctrines officially accepted) and the worry over Otto's state of health). It is almost touching and characteristic of Freud's noble personality that he likewise looks upon all his other dreams which seem to ridicule the sceptical criticism of his scientific antagonist merely as an egoistic wish fulfillment. Every person harbors in his breast the sceptical antagonist. The dream ridicules that part of the dreamer's own soul. How many struggles, how much sceptical self-criticism, a scientific pioneer must go through before he brings himself to the point of sponsoring views contrary to the currently established doctrines. There is, therefore, a very intimate relationship between friend Otto and Prof. R.

I have previously mentioned that the weaker, inferior self is either present in consciousness or easily available to it.\*

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\*It is noteworthy that Freud speaks also of a censure between consciousness and the fore-conscious.



But it is plain that *the trends which constitute the major force of the neurosis are not exclusively evil*. In some cases these trends may lead to a sort of sterile self-criticism, without necessarily assuming the form of a neurosis but sufficient to render impossible any independent or productive activity. What would be our fate, if all our mental life consisted wholly of uncurbed trends or uninhibited tendencies? Moreover, it is not always possible to determine what trends in a man's soul are truly progressive; i. e., correspond to the best direction for his development! In that connection the dream is an excellent indicator, provided it be understood aright. I recall coming upon the old problem of individual immortality while studying a philosophic work. I began to reflect that there was perhaps something useful in this old belief and this thought brought me into a happy state back of which, however, I perceived, an emotional undercurrent in the opposite direction. Waking up the following morning in a somehow depressed state of mind I recalled of the night's dream merely that Gunnar Wennerberg, the Swedish poet, had figured therein. I started associations and immediately it occurred to me that it was he who in his old age had renounced the works of his youth. The rôle he played in the dream became at once clear to me. I myself had disavowed the standpoint of my youth, a sacrificium intellectus which within the depths of my soul at the time I felt was a humiliation. In order not to be misunderstood I must state that it is far from my intention to express here my attitude towards the problem of immortality in connection with that dream.

The dream portrays merely the reaction upon assuming a trivial attitude towards a fundamental problem. Back of G. W. naturally stands the father and the dream material reveals thoughts and memories of conversations with my father wherein the latter played the same rôle as G. W. The dream is an Oedipus dream. Disavowal of the standpoint of youth—of the infantile, of the progressive. And, viewed in its deepest sense, the "eternal life" has the same meaning as in the following dream which is of particular interest in this connection. I had this dream when I was about 20 years of age, at a period when joy and pleasure obscures from view the dogma of immortality:

I dreamed I saw a man who had to choose between life eternal and a painful death. He chose deliberately the latter in order to avoid eternal life. I also know that he uttered the following words: "It is only a struggle!" (These words implying that he did not regret his choice. It may be deemed pardonable that a young man steeped in the self-annihilating fancies prevalent at his age should have looked upon this dream as the quintessence of a refined pessimism).

It is far from me to disavow now this dream of my youth. I accept it more earnestly than before. Courageously it counselled: "Live thy life daringly in accordance with thine own belief." Should I attempt a more detailed interpretation of the dream I would say that the painful death probably means not only dying but living and striving for one's convictions. The painful death means living by work, which the man in the dream preferred to living by faith in a chimera; the latter, i. e., life eternal,



means life without work; i. e., spiritual stagnation, death. As is well known we often find that in the dream life signifies death, and vice-versa.

It may also be noted that at the time I had the fancy of studying continually, i. e., without the formality of going through examinations. In the students' jargon: we have life eternal (or everlasting *bummeln*). Death torture, in prosaic interpretation, means the labor of examinations which is more of a torture to the pleasure-loving student than all *Weltschmerz*.

I believe also that the fear of death, in its deepest sense, refers to the fear of life and its responsibilities. The same emotional attitude is characteristic of both. Whoever truly loves life and follows the innermost trend of his life has no room in his breast for the fear of death. When a depressed subject states that he longs for death he is seldom able, I believe, to meet it with dignity.

I am reminded in this connection of a compulsion neurotic who, obsessed by suicidal thoughts, had, among other difficulties, the following dream: "My mother stood on the threshold of a door opening and beckoned to me with her hand. I had the feeling she wanted to say 'Come!'"

His mother was dead. Naturally he thought that this was a suggestion for suicide, that death was beckoning to him. Analysis showed the contrary: it was the analyst who beckoned to him and this meant life and work. He feared work as one fears death.

This dream was for me again proof that we obtain a deeper sense of the meaning of the dream if we do not take "mother" in a literal sense.

Freud speaks of the identification (in dreams) of children with genitalia. That may be true; but, above all, a child is a progressive symbol, a representative of spiritual health. In the course of the analysis the child very often stands as a substitute for the analyst and subjectively for the progressive trend. A child is a peculiarly suitable symbol for that, especially in the case of depressed patients and of subjects disillusioned with life. How often we find that some child is the patient's only consolation! Marriage may be a misfortune, life a burden. The only form in which the innate love of life can find representation in the dream, acceptable to the censure, as Freud states, is as a child. I have observed this fact in a number of instances. It is very interesting to me to see a patient coming with a new account, after having had his child appear repeatedly in the dream as a symbol for the analyst, and after seeing how his description led me to unravel the rôle of the child in his dream. The patient is already familiar with my views as to the possible significance of the child. He may even think of it and smile at the idea, yet his description always follows a certain direction, though he may try to introduce something novel. If on such occasions the patient is told: "I want to hear more about that, please!" the character of his description is not influenced; the description, strangely enough, is not even affected when the attempt is made experimentally to influence the patient's account. One seldom gets the impression more strongly than on such occasions that what comes to the surface is unconsciously determined. Often the most convincing material



looms up towards the end of the description.

That the child represents health, agrees thoroughly with the view that the infantile trend in the dream represents the progressive trend.

Another point: the child may stand for the neurosis just as the phallic symbol may figure in a negative sense.

I recall a compulsion neurotic whose chief difficulty was a hatred of his mother and of some other persons who played certain rôles in his life. The worse he felt the stronger was his criticism of his mother. The first sign of his improvement was this statement about his mother: "It cannot be gainsaid that she did have some excellent qualities." I wanted to know more about that. It was comical to see how very embarrassed he became. He tried very hard to think of something negative to say. But on that particular occasion he failed completely, although usually his tongue was very glib with invectives.

It is interesting to note with what meticulous care the persons are chosen in the dream.

One day at the beginning of an analysis it occurred to a young neurotic that in time the treatment will effect a great change. The dream during the following night represented the analysis as a young girl, of whom he said that when she will grow up she will undoubtedly rouse strong erotic desire.

A 30-year old hysterical woman, a teacher, recalls of a dream merely the fact that three persons figured in it: a school friend (A), her friend (B) and another school friend (C). The first, A., she described as the most talented of her class, but indolent and tactless with

the other teachers. She had not thought of this friend for a long time past but a particular friend of that woman had warned her against psychoanalysis. A., therefore, means neurotic resistance. "A scorned me because I maintained relations with C", said the patient. C was the analyst. She describes C as artless (the analyst labors without cunning, he little thinks of the intrigues going on behind his back) helpful, friendly, even towards people who are far from appreciative. B represents her progressive self: no special talents (the patient was very modest) but kind and honest; she did not get along very well in school (slow progress in the analysis). Much unrest at school, disturbances and disorder in the class so that the school principal (the analyst) had to speak up in a severe tone, adds the patient.

It is a well known fact in analysis that when the only thing that a patient recalls of a dream is that the dream was about a particular person, a great deal of significant material may lie back of that dream.

A neurotic who always felt conscience-stricken after debauches which he was too weak to resist often dreamed of persons whom he generally described as follows: "He had been a careless sort of a fellow and had caroused a great deal, but now he has sobered up."

A hysterical woman vacillating between healthy piety and superstition sees in her dreams a friend who keeps changing her clothes.

During the resistance phase a woman saw, as representing the analyst, two rejected suitors, in the same dream. Later, during the stage of emotional detachment the same symbol represented her



freeing herself from the analysis.

The dream chooses its environment with the same care with which it selects its personnel. The following is an elementary illustration: A young neurotic with a strongly pronounced attitude of displeasure towards work, dreams of the military muster grounds. With that he associates the military exercises at school, of which he says that they were always poor after an interval. The day before the dream was Sunday,—i. e., a pause, and he reflected with displeasure on the coming week's work.

During the detachment period a 20-year old student dreams of a back-yard. At first no associations occur to him,—which might possibly indicate homosexuality. I then mentioned that the word backyard might possibly refer to that. Thereupon he relates that during the previous evening, while in the company of a friend, he was spoken to by an elderly man who was very cordial but also very persistent and both suspected him of homosexuality. The stranger even offered to discount the patient's notes at the University. The patient answered that he hoped this would not be necessary. It is noteworthy that the patient who by that time had become wholly freed of his symptoms, found shortly afterwards that the analysis is taking up too much of his study time, just as the neurosis had previously done, and he had hoped to be able to help himself without the analysis. The previous evening's episode is woven into the texture of the dream so that the analyst becomes the pressing old gentleman whose services he declines.

This thought, belonging to the latent dream content, shows itself in the dream through the pictured environment.

It follows that a great rôle in the dream interpretation is played not only by the persons who figured in the dream, on account of the qualities which they portray; but that the inanimate objects, the whole environment, in fact everything seen by the dreamer must be looked upon as equally rich in autosymbolisms.

A woman suffering from anxiety hysteria has a dream which portrays her unstable emotional temperament. She sees a table which is unsteady and continuously shaking. A street corner once in a dream portrayed a spiritual turning point.

The dream obviously fuses time and space so that great space means a long time.\* When the treatment seems lengthy the patient dreams of being seated at a long table or of finding himself in a large room, etc. Colloquial expressions portray the same thing. For instance, "He has a long road to travel" is said of one whose task is unfinished and will take a long time to accomplish.

A woman whose fickleness brought her into numerous difficulties requiring analysis dreamed about a clock face of which she was able to see only the upper

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\*The same idea is expressed by Dr. Geza Roheim ("Spiegelzauber", *Imago*, 1917, vol. V., No. 2). He speaks of the magic workers among the savage peoples. "The magician gazes into the crystal where he sees the desired person or scene and he determines the time or the spatial distance of what he sees by the depth of the picture with reference to the surface of the crystal." The author adds: "Spatial concepts are thus transposed into temporal; the latter are represented by the unconscious through spatial terms."



half. Her associations reminded her of a relative's clock on which the customary numbers were replaced by the letters forming the owner's name. I sketched a clock face with those letters. It turned out that the upper part contained the letters which formed a word which meant something like patience. (The real word is not mentioned so as not to disclose the name).

If a patient is not truthful during the analytic session, the fact is often revealed in the course of the next session.

A hysterical woman who broke off associations at a delicate point, dreamed the following night of a woman, X, (the analyst) whom she had formerly disliked, but whom she now found very agreeable. (Her aversion to the analysis had been overcome on the previous day). X had a husband who betrayed her (Mr. X is she herself).

Another hysterical woman who was similarly unmasked, exclaimed: "I have tried to tell fibs during this treatment, but it can't be done."

A little 11-year old sinner (the dreamer of the Oedipus dream mentioned elsewhere) while relating his feeling-attitude towards the last day's work had avoided mentioning that the school tasks had seemed irksome to him. He furnished me the cryptolalia "o s a n i n a" (In Swedish "osanning" means "falsehood"). While associating to this he learned the meaning of the word and said that a school friend of his had been caught with a fib. I asked him facetiously how it was with him in that regard and he showed himself very surprised but claimed to have nothing on his mind and seemed sincere. But the truth came to light easily enough after that.

The patient who had the dream about the stolen apples also had the following dream:

I am about to have intercourse with a Jewess whose nose is straight."

The dream was interrupted by a pollution. The nose was a typical phallic symbol for him. He thought his own nose was not perfectly straight. He envied his father's nose on that account. We thus see that the feeling of insufficiency has its roots partly in a feeling of organic inferiority (Adler);\* The alleged curvature of his nose, naturally also determined the dream about the bent sword. It seems strange that he should choose the female objective with a straight nose. But, for one thing, the analyst is well aware of the fact that the sexual symbols are used in a bisexual sense. A woman whom he once thought he was going to marry had a very straight nose. His desire to find in women the same sort of straight nose as his father's,—his first impressions, in that respect, lead to the father, i. e., back to his infantile reminiscences—may justify the suspicion, as I understand it, of a homosexual trend. Viewed anagogically, the straight nose signifies for him a great joy in living. But there is also another reason why the dreamer gives his sexual object a straight nose. The Jewess, specifically, is the an-

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\*There are cases in which even the subject's name has a certain determining influence upon the neurosis. I recall one patient of this type, whose name, analyzed as a cryptolalia, might be interpreted as follows: "I do not want to know anything about sexuality", and I have never seen a stronger disinclination to work.



alyst. He says the Jewess is very erotic, i. e., young and attractive, but she ages rapidly. Translated into the previous day's thoughts, this means that the analysis had roused in him a quick and intense interest and yielded important results, but that things had been at a standstill for the past few days. He lost interest in the analysis as one does in a woman who ages rapidly. Now the dream corrects all that and the woman pictured therein is young, not aged at all, and he has endowed her with the progressive symbol which is ordinarily not associated with the Jewish facial appearance. He attributes greater power to the analysis. The dream makes up for the regressive attitude of the previous day (Freud's wish-fulfillment).

We must observe also that the patient was not free from antisemitic feelings. His attitude towards the Jewish race is practically the same as towards the analysis, towards marriage and work.

From the anagogic standpoint it is particularly interesting that the dream is accompanied by pollution. This grossly sensual dream gave a naive dramatization to his feeling-attitude towards his life problems.

Pollution dreams are particularly satisfactory material when interpreted anagogically, a fact which I have learned from Stromme. Freud, too, mentions that the so-called Bedürfniss-träume may be traceable to other than their formal content.)

Freud, as is well known, holds that the sexual realm is the one particularly subject to censure in dreams and breaking forth in apparently non-sexual forms. That this is so is beyond question. But in the above case we see that the obverse is true. There we see the general feel-

ing-attitude towards life breaking forth in a bluntly sexual picture. According to Freud, a thought unbearable in consciousness is repressed; in that connection he refers particularly to sexuality. Nevertheless I am firmly convinced, and my analyses constantly corroborate my view, that *the one thought which weak ones find unendurable is the thought of life's troublesome responsibilities*. At the risk of repeating myself I want to emphasize that *the neurotic withdraws from work as well as from sexuality*.

Regarding the anagogic interpretation Freud says that Silberer has emphasized and perhaps over-estimated the occurrence of concurrent yet different meanings in the dream, the analytic and the anagogic. The latter, he holds, revolves around very abstract thoughts and is much easier to find than the former. We thus see that Freud at least partially recognizes the principle of anagogic interpretation of dreams. It is perfectly clear that a complete dream analysis requiring the ferreting out of the whole infantile substratum involves more labor than the anagogic analysis of the actual material. At the same time I hold that without Freud's investigations we should not have achieved the latter. But a meaning need not be less significant because it is easily obtainable. On the other hand, as already pointed out, *the anagogic and the analytic (sexual) interpretations, besides being different in their method, are often contradictory and exclude one another*.

The school teacher mentioned above, whose acquaintance disturbed her confidence in psychoanalysis, dreamed that she embraced the physician, that his wife who was present left the room and that it pleased the doctor. The dream



looks like a jealousy dream and an erotic wish-fulfillment; but the physician's wife happens to stand in the dream as a surrogate for the friend in question. The whole incident culminating in success portrays something the reverse of egoistic.

A 36-year old man with strong fixation on his mother dreams: "I have beaten my father to death", and wakes up after this awful dream feeling excellently well. He had felt a consciously expressed animosity against his father and this was therefore easy to ascertain. Interpreted literally this dream naturally stands for a wish-fulfillment of the rawest kind and represents the most conscienceless egosim. And, taking into consideration the patient's account of his attitude towards his parents, there is no doubt that death wishes must have sometimes welled up close to the fringe of his consciousness and even though he would not deliberately entertain them such thoughts were not unreachable. But from the standpoint which I have just recognized, it will be easily appreciated that in such a dream I hold the anagogic meaning as the more significant one. The father stands for his selfishness, his evil self. Similar dreams about the deceased father,\* the extreme Oedipus dramatization, I have met more than once and without the anagogic interpretation I should now be at a loss to find any meaning therein.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration in connection with the interpretation of dreams is the subject's mental state the following day. If we get into the habit of noting the patient's mood we shall find that it corresponds generally to the content of the dream

(Maeder). Dreams in which regressive tendencies outweigh the progressive trends are followed by a depressed mood and vice-versa. Precisely because that is always the case with dreams in which the two meanings do not cancel one another, I am of the opinion that we are justified to make note of this fact.

It not infrequently happens that the *puella publica* represents the progressive tendency in the dream, specifically the analysis, precisely because of the great contrast between the uninhibited sexuality and the strong psychic inhibition. When a woman patient had this sort of dream I was unable to convince myself that she really harbored in her unconscious an unsatiable craving to be loved by as many men as possible. Polygamous tendencies which a woman is loathe to acknowledge even to herself are nevertheless relatively easy to bring into the light of consciousness. On the contrary, I have found that when in the course of analysis a woman comes in very excitedly and is anxious to acknowledge that the analysis has made her see at last that she has a strongly erotic disposition, the whole conduct amounts to no more than

\*In a strict sense we are here concerned not with the difference between the anagogic and the sexual interpretation; the question is one between subjective and objective interpretations. But this is not a very great distinction in terminology because the anagogic and subjective, for all practical purposes, usually coincide, although the anagogic naturally sometimes partakes of the character of the objective interpretation, as for instance, when instead of "woman" we see the "problem of life" as the object represented.



a mask and signifies resistance. She acts as if she were overcome by a strong sense of indignation against her awful instinctive cravings and the implication is that she has gazed into abysmal depths. But the whole thing is plain self-deception. True, she harbors certain prejudices against sexuality, but what actually rouses her is the perception that she is imposing on herself requirements that she is unwilling to acknowledge. Some female patients acknowledge their polygamous tendencies readily enough and they utilize the alleged excitement which follows as a screen to protect themselves against the need of gratifying other trends, the trends representing life's responsibilities. It not infrequently happens that a patient begins the treatment with the remark that she has an erotic disposition. That virtually means that she has a strong craving for life which, however, she is willing to acknowledge under the form of eroticism which she can disavow more easily than the pleasure of work. One must be prepared to meet with tremendous resistance in such a case. It is rather convenient to lay the blame on sexuality when it can not be gratified on either moral or social grounds, in order to escape being confronted with the task assuming life's responsibilities, since the craving for activity is something that can be gratified. Bearing in mind this conception of the polygamic tendency, the associative relations between the cult of the Madonnas and the cult of Hetaerae assumes a new light.

What I have said repeatedly about the lower trends in general, namely, that they are easily available to consciousness, holds true also of the criminal trends, as I have pointed out in connection with

the death wish. *Stekel's theory of the unconscious criminality seems to me an unjustified corollary of Freud's*; it finds me predisposed against it especially since I cannot share Freud's doctrine of infantile wishes.

I am reminded of a 30-year old unmarried woman (compulsion neurosis and hysteria) who dreamed she was in London inquiring about some black material; it was not to be had and she remarked: "how strange! All persons have occasion for mourning." Her associations recalled to her mind a woman friend of whom she reflected: will that friend never meet with a sad experience like all other persons? Here we find a repressed wish rooted in jealousy, the wish that the friend shall meet with misfortune.

What subjective counterpart to this inferior wish was to be found in that day's experiences?

She thought first of her disposition to spoil her previous day's otherwise happy mood. She conjured up worry for herself. As this act was compulsive there must have been something to repress back of that. Her worry, however, is also logical enough in itself, she is worried because she does not love, because she finds no joy in work.

Yesterday she had also the feeling that she had committed an unpardonable sin. She struggled against this thought as against a temptation. Consequently that was a worry which she did not accept. Instead, she dreamed that she was about to purchase a mourning dress. The ugly thought against the friend had been repressed, in statu nascendi, so to speak, but it became associated with the progressive tendencies of the unconscious and reappeared in the form of the com-



pulsive thought that she had committed an unpardonable sin (no love, no work) as well as in the tendency to spoil her disposition. The result of the repression of the inferior trend is that it returns in the form of a progressive trend.

I recall a 40-year old compulsion neurotic who lived a happily married life for many years. His wife was his greatest love. During their engagement he once felt a sexual attraction for another woman, but otherwise the latter had played no rôle in his life. Later he was obsessed by the thought that he did not love his wife dearly enough and this obsession tortured him for years. But there was no sexual wish whatever back of the thought; the objective that he did not love dearly enough was work. When the joy of work was strong with him the compulsive thought would disappear.

In order not to be misunderstood I must expressly state that I have taken into account what Freud has written about the compulsion neuroses and about the significance of sadism and of ambivalence while formulating the standpoint outlined above with reference to the nature of repression.

Regarding homicidal compulsion thoughts Freud says: the thought, "I want to kill you", while specifically of a sadistic nature, may be translated, "I want to love you." It is clear that the standpoint outlined by me agrees with Freud's interpretation at this point. I have mentioned it elsewhere and I want to emphasize here once more that I have never been able to find a split between Freud's analysis and the anagogic.

A 30-year old teacher, female (hys-

teria with strongly pronounced sado-masochistic complex), associates to a dream that as a child she had played the mother-and-daughter game; that she assumed the rôle of the punishing mother; and that she derived a great deal of pleasure through administering considerable chastisement. The previous day she had avoided a task, a study of a subject which she dislikes. That, according to Freud's terminology, leads to a regression back to an infantile sexual phase, sadism. She took great pleasure in criticising psychoanalysis, although inwardly she had accepted it and she revelled in the attempt to tear it down. Sadism was for her the only available form for the output of her libido, just as, under similar circumstances, other neurotics find the father, or the mother the most convenient objective upon which to transpose their dislike for work,—as a substitute for their feeling-attitude towards the work or task which confronts them. The objective of this woman's sadistic feelings naturally, was not only the analysis, but, more specifically, the hateful study subject. It is obvious that she tortured herself with this infantile attitude towards her objectives; the association with mother games and the punishing of children naturally corresponded to a subjective counterpart—her inferior self. The compulsive thought mentioned by Freud, "I want to kill you", therefore, is translatable not only as "I want to love you"; it also means "I want to kill my evil self." But we note that the two meanings are almost identical.

In one of his later contributions, "A child is being beaten", a little master-



piece full of instructive observations, like everything coming from Freud's pen, he writes on the Oedipus complex as follows: "None of these incestuous attachments can escape repression. They undergo this process either on account of apparently trivial external incidents leading to disillusionment, or on account of unexpected worries, or because of the undesired addition of a child to the family, which is perceived as a lack of loyalty, etc. But the repression may take place even without any outward determinant, perhaps as the result of the continual lack of the expected gratification."

Aside from the question of how much sexuality may be rightly ascribed to the Oedipus complex—a wholly theoretical problem, as I view it—I am of the opinion that this statement of Freud's contains a deep truth. The love of a child is uninhibited, measureless, wholly egoistic. From the child's standpoint egoism is not evil. Its mind contains no premises from which it can infer that reality is capable of setting any limitations to the range of its wishes. But when this must take place, especially if

it occurs in an unpleasant form, I believe that the child's soul is often hurt in the process. An unwise restriction, such as it often imposed on children leads to repression. It is then that the first repression of the joy of living takes place. When this becomes expressed in the dream under the form of infantile wishes I fail to find that the latter ought to be given literal interpretation, especially since the conscienceless and wholly selfish joy of living represented nothing evil at the time when it was subjected to repression. This is the point of view so far as I can see, which justifies the anagogic interpretation.

Freud, as is well known, holds that sexuality is repressed through the operation of cultural requirements. That, undoubtedly, is true; but I maintain that something else is also subjected to the same process of curtailment on account of the advancement of culture, namely the spontaneous, the naïve joy of living. *The repression of the joy of living is what furnishes the background for the development of the neuroses.*

[Translated by Dr. J. S. Van Teslaar,  
Brookline, Mass.]



## Analysing A Freudian Analysis

By S. A. Tannenbaum, M. D., *New York.*

One of the most dramatic and artistic analyses of a lapse of memory, one frequently referred to by psychoanalysts as a convincing demonstration of the truth of the psychoanalytic theories, is Professor Freud's analysis of the forgetting of the insignificant word "aliquis" in a line from Virgil's *Aeneid*. That the reader may be able to follow our argument, we reproduce Professor Freud's analysis (*The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, pp. 17-22) in *extenso*:

Last summer, while journeying on my vacation, I renewed the acquaintance of a young man of academic education, who, as I soon noticed, *was acquainted with some of my psychological writings*. In our conversation we drifted—I no longer remember how—to the subject of the social position of the race to which we both belong. He, *being ambitious*, bemoaned the fact that this generation, as he expressed it, was destined to grow to waste, that it was prevented from developing its talents and gratifying its desires. He concluded his passionate speech with the familiar verse from Virgil: "Exoriare . . ." in which the unhappy Dido leaves her vengeance upon Aeneas to posterity. Instead of "concluded", I should have said "wished to conclude" for he could not finish the quotation, and *attempted to conceal the obvious gap in his memory by transposing the words*:

Exoriar (e) ex nostris ossibus ultor!"

Finally, somewhat resentfully, he said: "Please don't make such a *mocking face*, as if you were gloating over by embarrassment, but help me rather. There is something missing in this verse. How does the complete line really go?"

"With pleasure", I answered, and cited it correctly, thus:

"Exoriar (e) aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!"

"How stupid to forget such a word!" he said. "By the way, I understand you claim that *forgetting is not without its reasons*; [*Italics ours throughout*] I should be very curious to find out how I came to forget this indefinite pronoun 'aliquis'."

I gladly accepted the challenge, *as I hoped to get an addition to my collection*, and said, "We can easily do this, but I must ask you to tell me frankly and without any criticism everything that occurs to your mind after you focus your attention, *without any definite purpose*, on the forgotten word.

"Very well; the ridiculous thought comes to me to divide the word in the following way: 'a' and 'liquis'."

*What does that mean?*

"I don't know."

*What else does that recall to you?*

"My mind goes on to 'reliques'—'liquidation'—'fluidity'—'fluid'—Does that tell you anything?"



No, not by far! But continue!

"I now think", he said, laughing sarcastically, "of Simon of Trent, whose relics I saw two years ago in a church in Trent. I am thinking of the old accusation of blood-guilt which is now again being brought against the Jews, and of the writings of Kleinpaul, who sees in these alleged sacrifices reincarnation or revivals, so to speak, of the Savior."

This stream of thoughts is not unrelated to the theme which we were discussing before the Latin word escaped you.

"Right. I now think of an article in an Italian journal which I read recently. I believe it was entitled 'What St. Augustine says about Women.' What do you make of this?"

I say nothing.

"Now I think of something which surely has no connection with our theme."

Please refrain from all criticism, and—

"Oh, I know! I recall a handsome old gentleman whom I met on my journey last week. He was a genuine 'original'. He looks like a big bird of prey. His name, if you care to know, is Benedict."

Well, at least *you give a grouping of saints and Church fathers* "St. Simon", "St. Augustine", and "St. Benedict." I believe that there was a *church father named "Origines."* Three of these, moreover, are Christian names, like "Paul" in the name of "Kleinpaul."

"Now I think of 'St. Januarius' and his blood miracle—I find that these thoughts go on mechanically."

Just stop a moment; both "St. Januarius" and "St. Augustine" *have something to do with the calendar.* Will you recall to me the blood miracle?

"Surely you know all about it! The

blood of St. Januarius is preserved in a phial in a church in Naples, and on a certain holiday it becomes fluid by virtue of a miracle. The people make much of this miracle, and become greatly stirred up if it is retarded, as happened once during the French occupation. Thereupon the General in command—or am I mistaken, was it Garibaldi?—took the priest aside and pointing significantly to the soldiers arrayed without, expressed the hope that the miracle would very soon transpire. And it actually took place . . ."

Well, and what else? Why do you hesitate?

"Something has just occurred to me . . . but it is too intimate a matter to impart . . . besides, I see no connection and no necessity for telling it."

I will take care of the connection. Of course, I cannot compel you to reveal what is disagreeable to you, but then you should not have asked me to tell you how you forgot the word "*aliquis*."

"Really? Do you think so? Well, I suddenly thought of a lady from whom *I could easily get a message that would be very unpleasant to us both.*"

That she missed her period?

"How can you guess that?"

That is no longer difficult. You prepared me for it sufficiently. Just think of the saints of the calendar, the liquefaction of the blood on a certain day, the commotion if the event does not take place, and the distinct threat that the miracle must take place . . . Indeed, you have elaborated the miracle of St. Januarius into a clever allusion to the woman's courses.

"It was surely without my knowledge. And do you really believe that my inability to reproduce the little word "*aliquis*" was due to this anxious expectation?"

That seems to me beyond doubt. Don't you recall dividing it into "a-



liquis" and the associations: "reliques", "liquidation", "fluid"? Shall I also add in this connection the fact that St. Simon, to whom you got by way of the reliques, *was sacrificed as a child?*

"Please stop. I hope you do not take these thoughts—if I really entertained them—seriously. I will, however, confess to you that the lady is Italian, and that I visited Naples in her company. But may not all this be coincidence?"

I must leave to your own judgment whether you can explain all these connections through the assumption of coincidence. But I assure you that *every similar case that you will analyse will lead you to just such remarkable coincidences!*

The way the forgetting occurred must be construed thus: The speaker had deplored the fact that the present generation of his race is being deprived of its rights, and, like Dido, he had predicted that a new generation would take upon itself vengeance against the oppressors. So, then, *he has expressed a wish for posterity.* At that moment a *contradictory thought intruded itself:* "Do you really earnestly wish for posterity? That is not true. In what a predicament you would be if you were now to receive information that you may expect posterity from a certain quarter *which you have in mind!* No, no posterity,—no matter how much it may be needed for vengeance! This contradiction asserts itself . . . by establishing an extrinsic association between one of the elements of his idea and one of the elements of the objectionable wish, [which is] brought about in an extremely strained manner by an apparently artificial detour of associations . . . We have [here] a second mechanism of forgetting, viz.: the disturbance of thought through an inner contradiction emanating from the repression.

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Professor Freud undoubtedly intend-

ed the above analysis as a scientific demonstration of the principle enunciated by him in the concluding sentence. We are therefore warranted in submitting it to a criticism in the manner characteristic of exact science.

1. In the first place, then, it must be pointed out that Professor Freud's account of the analysis is inadequate from a scientific point of view because the experiment, if we regard it as such, was not taken down immediately and verbatim by an impartial and unprejudiced stenographer. We are therefore in no position to judge how much Professor Freud suggested to the subject and what fine nuances in the subject's words he overlooked or ignored. In a psychological experiment of this nature the slightest gesture, a peculiar intonation of the voice, a wrinkling of the forehead, a look, etc., may be of significance. Errors of commission and omission are altogether too frequent in such experiments. As Professor Freud's report stands now it has no more value than hearsay or anecdotal evidence and that is little enough in science.

2. The subject, a young man with an academic education, was acquainted with Freud's theories as to forgetting and was therefore not a fit subject for an impartial, unprejudiced investigation, no matter how honest he may have intended to be. Professor Freud encouraged the young man to associate under the impression that if he continued long enough they would discover *the cause for—i. e., the meaning of—the forgetting.* This is out and out suggestion. Professor Freud should have reminded the gen-



tleman that there are, as he himself says elsewhere, other causes for forgetting besides repression. His failure to do this is a serious defect in his experiment.

3. We are told absolutely nothing about what the young man's thoughts had been prior to the discussion in which the forgetting occurred. Had he thought of the young Italian woman that morning? When had he last heard from her? Was there more reason for worrying about her menses now than previous months? Had he ever given her menses any thought? Many questions along this line occur to us, but the reader will supply these for himself. Their significance is obvious. If the woman's menses had not engaged his (conscious) attention whatsoever we cannot accept the theory that the forgetting of the word "aliquis" was "determined" by that, unless we are given more logical proof than that offered us by Professor Freud.

4. Nothing is told us about how much English the young academician knew, or whether he was in the habit of seeing English words in foreign words, whether he thought in English, and whether he usually thought of blood as a liquid (instead of a fluid).

5. It would have been of the utmost importance for us to know whether the young man knew the exact meaning of the verse in question or whether he knew it only vaguely. It so happens that this verse ("Exoriare aliquis ex ossibus ultor",—*Aeneid*, Book IV, 625) is capable of two interpretations, one being a prayer for the coming of an unknown avenger ("May an avenger issue from

our ashes!) and the other an address to an avenger ("Arise from our ashes, thou avenger!"). In the former, the word "aliquis" is practically equivalent to "ignotus", i. e., unknown, whereas in the latter it has the force of "someone" who is fully known. If the young man's ideas about the exact meaning of the sentence were vague we would have a sufficient explanation for his inability to recall the adjective or pronoun that should modify the substantive "ultor." That this was really the case seems to be proved by the fact that he forgot this adjective rather than some other part of the verse.

6. The experiment might have been of real value to psychology if Professor Freud had not committed the fatal blunder of supplying the missing word. Had he not done so it would have been interesting to see whether the young man's associations would have brought him to the forgotten word and what his associations would have been. As it was, Professor Freud is open to the charge of having directed the young man's attention in the direction of something which may already have been consciously occupying his mind.

7. It was an error on Professor Freud's part to ask, "What else does it recall to you?" when the young man had as yet recalled nothing.

8. An even more serious error—and one fatal to the scientific character of the experiment—is Professor Freud's telling the young man that he had brought together a group of saints and church fathers, especially as he had mentioned only two. There is no reason



for connecting the word "original" with Origines, and there is nothing to show that the young man knew of the existence of Origines or that Origines was a church father. Furthermore, the young man did not mention "*St. Benedict*"; he had spoken only of a man named "Benedict." Had Professor Freud asked him to associate to "Benedict" or to the "original", the subsequent associations would in all likelihood have been very different from what they were. So, too, Professor Freud might have asked the young gentleman to associate to "St. Simon", to "Kleinpaul", to "Benedict", to "bird of prey", or to the false charges against the Jews, or to the article about women, and in each case the subsequent associations must have been very different. His not doing so proves the thoroughly arbitrary and accidental character of the whole procedure. It was only after Professor Freud's lead that the young man said, "Now I think of St. Januarius and his blood miracle." In a properly conducted scientific experiment the investigator should have asked nothing, made no comments, but should have allowed the subject to continue to associate without guidance or interruption.

9. That Professor Freud actually directed the young man's mind to the subject of sex and the sexual function is proved by the fact that it was he, and not the young man, who first spoke of the calendar and connected these with the "blood miracle", thus suggesting "monthlies, menses." No sooner had the young man mentioned "St. Januarius" and the "blood miracle" than Pro-

fessor Freud hastened to refer back to "St. Augustine" and to suggest that these had "something to do with the calendar." And he followed this suggestion up with a direct question concerning the blood miracle, thus getting the young man to concentrate on blood. Professor Freud no doubt knows—and took advantage of his knowledge—that there are many young men, journeying on their vacations, who "could" get news from somewhere that a certain person is worried about her menses. It may be of significance in this connection that when Professor Freud supplied the missing word he "made a mocking face." A scientist does not begin an experiment with a mocking face.

10. In this discussion of the forgetting of the word "aliquis", Professor Freud tells us that "the usual way of bringing to consciousness hidden ideas" is for the subject to tell frankly and without any criticism everything that occurs to his mind after he has focussed his attention, *without any definite purpose, on the forgotten word.* One has only to read the reported analysis to see that the actual procedure does not in the least correspond to this description. The young man began his free associations with a very definite purpose: to discover the cause of the lapse in something of a repressed and tabooed nature; Professor Freud did everything in his power, by direct and indirect suggestions, to lead the young man to tabooed and sexual matters. And, furthermore, the young man was not permitted to associate freely; his mind was constantly being directed by Professor Freud's questions



and suggestions.

11. In a properly conducted scientific experiment, undertaken with the object of determining why a scholar forgot a particular word in a given verse in a foreign tongue, it would be of the utmost importance to determine what percentage of students (of a certain age and in a given state of health, etc.), who had learned that particular verse a certain number of years ago can recall that verse correctly. It would also be important to estimate how many forgot the significant words, how many the insignificant words, how many the verbs, etc. Then it would have to be determined whether psycho-physiological causes alone would or would not account for the forgetting in all as well as in particular instances. Only after all this was done and the forgetting could not be explained on known and proved psychological principles, would we be justified in resorting to an unproved and hypothetical assumption. Professor Freud has made no such study and therefore his "analysis" of the forgetting of the word "aliquis" in one particular instance has absolutely no scientific value. In this connection I may mention that not a single scholar to whom I spoke of the "familiar verse" under consideration was able to recall it correctly. And surely no one, except perhaps Professor Freud, expects to be able to recall all the Latin verses, even such "familiar" ones as "Exoriare", etc., that he had learned in his student days. And it would require a great deal more evidence than has yet been offered us to make us believe that all these instances of the forgetting of the verses are "complex"-determined.

12. Another matter that should have been determined by Professor Freud before he drew his conclusion about "a second mechanism of forgetting" is the question whether he would not have elicited the same facts if the young man had happened to forget some other word, e. g., "exoriare", in the sentence, instead of the word "aliquis", or had forgotten to tie his cravat or lace his shoes. Had the young man that morning really been worried about his friend's menses we would have no hesitation in saying that sooner or later he would have spoken of that subject in associating to any word in the given sentence, or in any other sentence, or to his untied cravat. This would completely disprove the supposition that the forgetting of the word "aliquis" was "complex"-determined.

13. The fact that after several minutes' talk, consisting of free associations and answers to suggestive questions, the young man spoke of a subject of a private and personal nature, *i. e.*, a woman's menses, does not prove that there was a causal relationship between the forgetting of the word which was the starting point for the colloquy and the presence in the young man's mind of a latent worry about that woman's menstrual period. We must remember in this connection that the gentleman had *not* worried about the matter, and that he said only that he *could* get a message that would be unpleasant. But even if he had been anxious about the matter, that would not prove that there was a causal relationship between that worry ("anxious expectation") and the forgetting of the word "aliquis."



14. In his commentary on the analysis, Professor Freud says that the young man had "expressed a wish for posterity." But he had really not done so; he had only implied a wish that in the future someone might arise who would avenge the wrongs of the Jews. This has nothing to do with his own posterity. And incidentally, but by no means irrelevantly, it may be pointed out that in such a situation as that we are now dealing with the young man would be sure to say "progeny" (not "posterity"), if he were thinking of his own offspring. It remains yet to be shown that the wordless unconscious identifies "posterity" with "progeny."

15. Continuing his commentary, Professor Freud says that "at that moment a contradictory thought introduced itself" into the young man's mind. As we have heard nothing of this "contradictory thought" from the young man himself, we must infer that Professor Freud assumes that the "thought" of which he speaks (Do you really earnestly wish for posterity? That is not true. In what a predicament you would be if you were now to receive information that you may expect posterity from : certain quarter which you have in mind! No, no posterity!") and which inhibited the recollection of the word "aliquis" was "unconscious." But we have been taught that the Freudian Unconscious consists of repressed, forbidden desires, of conative trends, of speechless urges, yearnings, cravings. Surely, the unconscious thought which Professor Freud attributes to the travelling academician cannot be described as an urge, a longing,

and much less as a repressed desire. Thoughts and impulses (cravings, yearnings) are not identical phenomena, and one cannot be substituted for the other. If the subject had those thoughts (not "that thought") he was conscious of them as such, and if he was conscious of them they were not the "unconscious" determinants of the forgetting. Unconscious thinking is an oxymoron which is made impossible by Professor Freud's own definition of the wish-character of his "Unconscious."

16. Why, it may be asked, did Professor Freud stop his investigation when they came to the matter of the possible gestation? What reason had he for concluding that the search was finished? Why didn't he ask the gentleman to continue his "free associations?" Surely the possibly suppressed menses were not the only unpleasant subject that might have occurred to the young man's mind if the investigator had continued to quiz him long enough. In fact, it is more than likely that very unpleasant thoughts which had actually occurred (not that "could" have occurred) to him might have been elicited without any very great difficulty. Professor Freud's procedure leaves no room for doubt that he stopped the "investigation" when he found something that seemed to coincide with what was in him a foregone conclusion, namely, that something of a sexual or painful nature lies behind every forgetting. That that is so is corroborated by his statement that "every similar case that you will analyze will lead you to just such remarkable 'coincidences'." Needless to say, it explains the uncon-



tific technique pursued by Professor Freud throughout his "investigation"; his bias and his "hope to get an addition to his collection" ruined what in the hands of a more careful scientist might have been an important experiment.

17. Owing to the extrinsic associations between the word "aliquis" and one of the elements of the (conjectured) objectionable wish, this insignificant word was repressed so intensely that it could not be recalled. That is what Professor Freud would have us believe. The forgetting saved the young man from pain which he might have felt as a result of the unconscious associations emanating from the presence in consciousness of the in itself harmless word "aliquis." To us this theory seems to be sufficiently disproved by the fact that the intrapsychic censor, so solicitous about the young man's feelings, did not interfere with his recollection—under Professor Freud's guidance—of the much more direct and significant allusions to blood, the months of the year, St. Simon, etc. If these things so readily recurred to the gentleman's mind, surely the word "aliquis" should have been passed by the censor.

18. One of the most serious errors committed by Professor Freud in the above analysis was his omission to get his companion's free associations to the English word "liquidation." Needless to say, the young man may have known, and probably did know, that "liquidation" and "liquefaction" are not synonymous terms. And we therefore, have here a word—the third in his associations—which has no reference to the assumed "complex", switches away from what

we are asked to regard as a "complex-indicator", viz., the word "reliques", and leads back again to another "indicator" ("fluidity"). Why this happens is nowhere explained nor is the fact itself pointed out or commented on.

Had the gentleman been invited to associate freely to the word "liquidation" we might have obtained some very interesting, and perhaps painful, data about his financial affairs, about difficulties in meeting his bills, about the importance of money to the Jews (and this would connect up with the conversation which led up to the lapse), etc. In this way, no doubt, important matters might have been elicited, perhaps not of a sexual nature, which had actually engaged the young man's conscious attention that morning. And in that case it would be left to us to decide whether these ideas or the possible worry about a woman determined or influenced his forgetting of the word "aliquis."

It is not impossible that had he been encouraged to continue his free associations to "liquidation", "fluid" and "fluidity", we might have elicited the recollection of enuresis nocturna, and then we should have been in no doubt as to the reason for his forgetting the innocent "aliquis." This would be strictly in accordance with Professor Freud's theory that behind ambition (Note the opening conversation!) we often, if not always, find unconscious memories of enuresis in childhood. Note, in this connection, these associations: a liquid, a relic of childhood, Simon (infants all wet their beds), Kleinpaul (the little Paul, *i. e.*, *membrum virile*), stream (!)



of thoughts, woman (more girls suffer from enuresis than boys), etc.

One would have thought, too, that before Professor Freud had reached the conclusion that the possibility of hearing of the non-occurrence of a certain woman's menses could cause a young Jew who had once studied Latin and some English to forget the commonplace word "aliquis" in a verse in Virgil's *Aeneid*, that he would at least have inquired whether the gentleman in question had been able to recall that verse correctly a month or more prior to the reported conversation. But that seems not to have occurred to Professor Freud. And yet we all know that we sometimes forget words, names, quotations, etc., which at other times we can recall with ease. In the present instance this fact would, obviously, have been of the utmost importance; if the young Jew could not have recalled the verse correctly prior to his liaison there would be nothing surprising in his present lapse of memory and we would not be expected to believe that this lapse was due to a possible concern about possible progeny. In the absence of any information along this line, the analysis of the forgetting of the word "aliquis" loses any possible value as a scientific experiment that it might possibly otherwise have had.

Inasmuch as Professor Bleuler, notwithstanding his repudiation of the bulk of Freud's teachings, defends the analysis of the forgotten "aliquis", we shall briefly examine some of his statements and arguments ("Jahrbuch f. psychoanalytische u. psychoapathologische Forschungen", 1910, vol. 2, pp. 648-654).

He says that according to Freud the word "aliquis" "reminded" the gentleman's Unconscious of the absence of an anxiously anticipated menstruation. This statement is erroneous in the following respects: the Unconscious does not remember or reason or know or think, —it only wishes and wishes in symbolic or pictorial form; hence the word could not have "reminded" the Unconscious of anything. Then, too, the gentleman did not know that the menses had not appeared, and we have no evidence anywhere that the man was worried about the matter; he said only that he "could" get news that would be unpleasant.

Professor Bleuler avers that the forgetting of "such an ordinary word as "aliquis" is extraordinary and needs special explanation. This is not true; besides, he begs the question. If anything, an ordinary word in a foreign tongue ought, according to all known and accepted psychological principles, to be more readily forgotten than an uncommon word. The law of associations applies. Besides, if the young man did not know the exact meaning of the verse in question and the force of the bivalent word "aliquis", we would have a sufficient explanation for his inability to recall it.

Very few Latinists, says Bleuler, would have divided the word "aliquis" into "a" and "liquis", inasmuch as this word has nothing to do with the root of the word "liquidus." But there is absolutely nothing in Professor Freud's narrative to warrant the assumption that the young man was a Latinist. The abil-



ity to dimly recall a Latin verse from one's student days does not make one a Latinist. And it remains to be shown that the gentleman in question knew enough Latin to know the etymology of the word "aliquis." We have known fairly good Latin students who didn't know that. It does not, then, follow that there was a complex-determined preparedness in the gentleman's mind for the incorrect division of the word "aliquis." And, furthermore, we have no means of knowing whether he even knew the correct scansion of the verse he intended to quote (he misplaced some of the words!) or on what syllable to put the main stress in the forgotten word. If he read the word "aliquis" in this verse with the stress on the first *i* (a-li-quis) we would think it quite natural for him to begin by dividing it into "a" and "liquis."

Bleuler asserts that it was extremely unlikely for the subject accidentally to divide the word "aliquis" as he did inasmuch as he showed no special tendency to "sound associations." But in this Professor Freud's champion is in error, for, as a matter of fact, the young man went

on to associate "*reliques*" and "*liquidation*" to *liquis*.

The other points raised by Professor Bleuler do not call for special attention as they have practically all been dealt with in our comments on Professor Freud's analysis. But before we dismiss the subject we venture to raise a theoretical question: If a possible concern about the possible non-occurrence of a woman's menses could cause the forgetting of a word so remotely and indirectly related to this phenomenon as the word "aliquis" is, why did it not rather cause the forgetting of the word "exorire" (exorcism, expulsion, abortion) which can be so much more directly linked up with the assumed apprehended gestation?

Summing it all up, we may say that Professor Freud has not proved or even shown it to be probable that the forgetting of the word "aliquis" was complex-determined, that the Unconscious had anything to do with it, or that there was any relationship between the forgetting and the matters he elicited by his questions and suggestions.



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